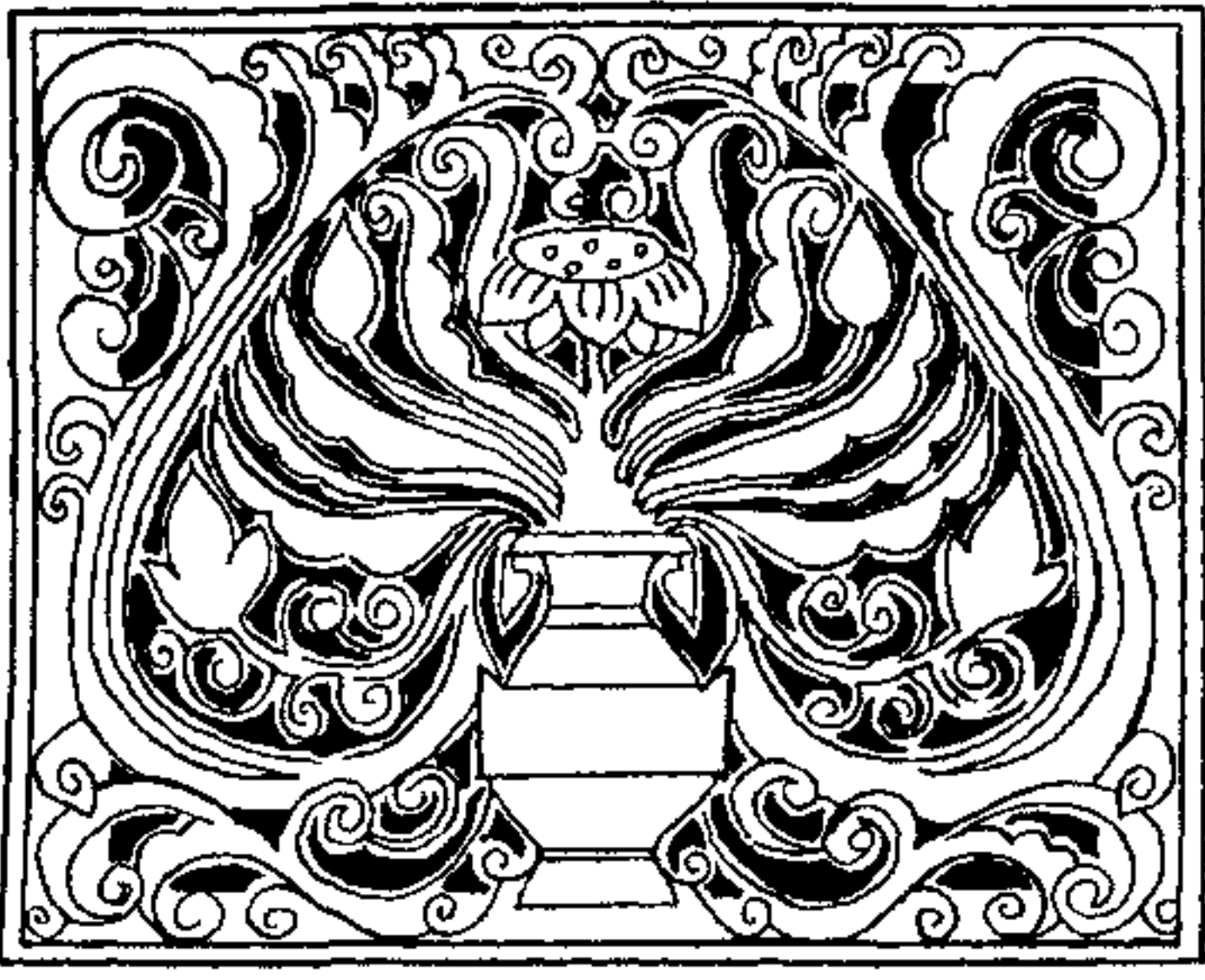




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JULY 1996

CONTENTS

Divine Wisdom	409
The Twentieth Century Skill in Action Editorial	410
Madhusudana Saraswati on the Bhagavad-Gita Swami Gambhirananda	412
Unpublished Letters	417
Religion and Diversity Dr. Huston Smith	420
The Cultic Mindset Richard Chambers Prescott	424
Ten Verses On the Divine Experiences of Devi Roop Bhavani Ms. Aparna Dar	429
The Dance of Shiva P. Shneidre	432

(Continued on next page)

CONTENTS (Contd.)

Nature and Destiny of Man : Sri Aurobindo <i>Dr. A. Usha Rani</i> 433	The Mundaka Upanishad <i>Swami Sridharananda</i> 446
Where Gods Reside <i>Shanti Dighe</i> 436	<i>Practical Vedanta</i> 450
Review Article 444	<i>News and Reports</i> 451
	<i>Reviews & Notices</i> 453
	<i>Books Received</i> 456

उत्तिष्ठत
जाग्रत
प्राप्य
वरान्निबोधत



PRABUDDHA BHARATA

ARISE! AWAKE! AND STOP NOT TILL THE GOAL IS REACHED

Vol. 101

JULY 1996

No. 7

Divine Wisdom

THE WAY OF RELEASE

यमादिभिर्योगपथैरभ्यसन् श्रद्धयान्वितः।
मयि भावेन सत्येन मत्कथाश्रवणेन च॥

सर्वभूतसमत्वेन निर्वैरेणाप्रसङ्गतः।
ब्रह्मचर्येण मौनेन स्वधर्मेण बलीयसा॥

यदृच्छयोपलब्धेन सन्तुष्टो मितभुङ्मुनिः।
विविक्तशरणः शान्तो मैत्रः करुण आत्मवान्॥

सानुबन्धे च देहेऽस्मिन्नकुर्वन्नसदाग्रहम्।
ज्ञानेन दृष्टतत्त्वेन प्रकृतेः पुरुषस्य च॥

The disciplines for the attainment of liberation are as follows: The discipline of Yoga, consisting in the practice of inward concentration along with the control of the senses and the mind, has to be practised with absolute faith in the spiritual destiny of man. One should have genuine devotion to Me and practise the discipline of devout listening to accounts of My deeds and excellences. Equal sympathy and love for all, abstinence from the exploitation of others, non-attachment, continence, silence, discharge of duties conscientiously, satisfaction with one's legitimate income, moderation in eating, devotional retreats in solitude, friendliness to all, calmness of disposition, kindness, self-control, absence of attachment to one's body and to one's kith and kin, reflection on the distinction between Purusha (Atman), and Prakriti (Nature). These are some of the disciplines to be followed.

The Twentieth Century Skill in Action

Reviewing a book for us (see p.445), Dr. Satish K. Kapoor quotes from a story done by Anatole France, in which a clever Parisian woman prays before an image of Mother Virgin Mary:

Holy Mother! You conceived without sinning. Let me sin without conceiving.

What is the message? Surely, Anatole had something else on his mind when he wrote that. But to us it seemed to expose only too well a visceral impulse of this century—especially its later half—, which has assumed all-engulfing proportions: Desire to enjoy life freely—without restraint and without the burden of guilt, avoiding only the unpleasant consequences. Call it the pill-or the condom-syndrome.

Now, that story reminded us of a phrase in the *Bhagavad-Gita*—*karmasu kauśalam*, skill in work. There the implications are of course different. Briefly: We have to work. Though we suffer failures and sorrows also, the very nature of work draws us more into it, promising greater knowledge, power, comforts, joy, etc. All the while we think we are its masters. But the hidden fact is that it is work that has the compelling capacity. Over a time it binds us in a tangle of duties and obligations, likes and dislikes, expectations and despair, satisfaction and frustration. Ordinarily we think that, this binding nature of all work, and the exertion and disappointment it involves cannot in any case be countered. So the best we can do is to develop a compatible skill to get the most out of our situation; more, to improve or alter the situation itself.

But, cautions the *Gita*, true skill isn't just the ability to squeeze out our livelihood from a difficult world, or efficiency in work, success and comfort—i.e. external achieve-

ments, sense-gratification and mundane joy. True skill is that by which one transforms the enslaving power of one's activities. The *Gita*-skill empowers us to engage in work and try to achieve all that is desirable. Yet we are not to get ensnared by the oppressive demands of work, or get overwhelmed by its positive or negative consequences.

However, the 'skill' of the 20th century, satirized as it were by Anatole, is another matter. In fact, one of the achievements to this century's credit is this skill. Credit not for having *discovered* it—for there always were people possessing it—but for rationalizing and globalizing it, for successfully selling it even to the mainstream culture.

With this skill people are able to legitimize the illegitimate—all that are termed scams, corrupt, unethical, unsocial, and so on. The tools for this alchemy? A few intellectuals or 'researchers' to quote as authorities, appropriate vocabulary, a suitable philosophy, access to image-building media, and right connections.

Deny guilt when there is no evidence. Be hand in glove with rogues and, then, suppressing evidence, protect them to save oneself; call it institutional interest. Dump toxic wastes and drugs banned at home on unsuspecting poor countries; then call it trade. Fly out to remote beaches and resorts to indulge in sexual phantasies; cover it as tourism, necessary for increasing national revenue. Start Boy/Girl Scouts' association as a sanitized cover for child-molesters scouting for boys and girls. Spread prostitution and AIDS, and then bemoan lack of sex-education; then introduce that into school curriculum and distribute condoms; show on TV how one should walk with 'confidence' into a druggist to purchase condoms;

good for the health industry. Launder drug-money for arms to encourage terrorism and internal strife in unobliging nations, and at the same time target opium-growing countries for punitive sanctions.

And then, still be able to put on a straight face and be counted in society as liberated intellectual ladies and gentlemen.

All walks of life, even the family, and educational and religious institutions have caught this syndrome in one way or another, more or less. But how, or when, does such a thing become possible? When more and more people start believing they can disown at will their responsibility for the harmful, external, visible consequences of their actions. When there are no firm and clear values to guide conduct, and when the very concept or feeling of guilt is argued to be a psychological hindrance to healthy life, a barrier against spontaneity and freedom. When not holding values is itself rationalized to be a kind of value conducive to self-actualization. When the immediate is the ultimate. That Paris lady, poor thing, was old fashioned. Had she this skill, she mightn't have even prayed.

This skill may help people pretend to be free and escape social stigma or the prison. But going by the mental health of individuals and societies, there is certainly something utterly wrong with this skill and the freedom etc. it is imagined to confer; with the arguments put forward to defend this skill and freedom. For, considered more closely, this freedom is really a bondage—bondage to habit, impulse, greed, passion, pride. It is wholly dependent on externals—people, objects and conditions. When lust and greed, and expectations and power are thwarted, these 'free' people suffer frustration, anxiety, fear and humiliation. Disappointment, sorrow, resentment, revenge can never be where true freedom is. So, neither can the way of doing things that leads to such delusive freedom be skill. Once we

begin to *feel* this, then what the *Gita* has said in the matter makes sense.

It says: Skill is not the ability to act as we please to satisfy our desires and enjoy, avoiding only the pain and embarrassment of 'child-birth'. Skill is the ability to meet only those desires that do not multiply desires and nourish selfishness; through such ways as foster the joy and freedom of selfpossession and spiritual unfoldment; and thus convert 'work, the enslaver' to 'work, the liberator'—work that itself releases us from its bondage. Only such a freedom can be a permanent guiding value.

The ideal method of working, enjoying and preventing 'birth', was once brought

True skill isn't just the ability to squeeze out our livelihood or enjoy. It is that by which one transforms the enslaving power of one's activities.

out tellingly by Swami Madhavananda, the ninth president of our Order, when he was in the USA. One day Swami Nikhilananda, a disciple and the author of the well-known biography of Sri Sarada Devi, and the then spiritual head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, New York, and he were talking. At one point the free-ranging conversation turned to the highly controversial and still-widely debated topic of birth-control. Suddenly, Swami Madhavananda, seated at the head of the table, remarked, 'Birth-control is a very good thing.' An immediate stunned silence descended, because some devotees, men and women too, were present. All were looking at him, unbelieving that he of all people held such a view.

He continued: 'If it is control of one's own birth. No more births. That is the way to practise birth-control.'

That is also the way all our other activities become transparent, focussed by a value (viz. real freedom) and genuinely guilt-free. This alone is true skill. □

Madhusudana Saraswati on the Bhagavad-Gītā

SWAMI GAMBHIRANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

CONQUEST OF DESIRE, THE ENEMY OF SPIRITUAL ASPIRANTS

That its enmity follows from its being a great sinner is being shown through illustrations:

धूमेनाव्रियते वह्निर्यथाऽदर्शो मलेन च।
यथोल्बेनावृतो गर्भस्तथा तेनेदमावृतम्॥

*Dhūmenāvriyate vahnir-
yathādarśo malena ca;
Yatholbenāvṛto garbhastatha
tenedamāvṛtam. (3.38)*

As fire is enveloped by smoke, and as a mirror by dirt, (and) as a foetus remains enclosed in the womb, so is this shrouded by that.

As to that, since the mind cannot function before the origination of the body, therefore desire remains in a subtle form. Then it takes a gross form, becoming manifest in the mind that has become active in the gross body on account of the deeds that originated the body. That (desire) itself becomes grosser when it is excited again and again in the state when an object is being thought of. That itself becomes most gross when it has attained maximum excitement in the state when the object is being enjoyed.

An illustration of the first state is this: As *vahniḥ*, fire, which is luminous by nature; is *āvriyate*, enveloped; *dhūmena*, by smoke, which is (its) concomitant and is naturally not luminous. The illustration of the second state is this: *Ca*, and; *yathā*, as; *ādarśaḥ*, a

mirror; is (covered) *malena*, by dirt, which is not its concomitant and comes to exist after the origin of the mirror. The *ca*, and, is used to point out secondary differences (between the two, mirror and dust) and also for connecting with (the verb) *āvriyate*, is covered. The illustration for the third stage is: *Yathā*, as; (a foetus) *āvṛtaḥ*, remains enclosed; by being shut in completely *ulbena*, by the caul, (rather) by the very gross membrane (chorion) that encloses the foetus.

Tathā, so, in all the three ways; is *idam*, this; *āvṛtam*, shrouded; *tena*, by that, by desire. Among these, fire, even though covered by smoke, accomplishes its own actions like burning etc. But the mirror covered by dirt does not perform its own function of reflecting an image, the quality of polish alone being dulled. However, it continues to be perceived as it is. On the other hand, the foetus covered by the membrane does not perform its own functions such as extending the hand, feet, etc., nor is it perceived in its true form. This is the distinction.

He (the Lord) amplifies the brief statement, 'so is this shrouded by that':

आवृतं ज्ञानमेतेन ज्ञानिनो नित्यवैरिणा।
कामरूपेण कौन्तेय दुष्पूरेणानलेन च॥

*Āvṛtam jñānametena
jñānino nityavairiṇā;
Kāmarupeṇa kaunteya
duṣpūreṇānalena ca. (3.39)*

O son of Kuntī, the mind is covered by this constant enemy of the wise in the form of desire, which is like an insatiable fire.

Jñānam, derivatively meaning 'that through which (something) is known', i.e. the mind or discriminative knowledge, pointed out by the word *idam*, this (in verse 38); is *āvṛtam*, covered; *etena*, by this, by desire. Still, being a source of momentary joy¹, it may be acceptable. Hence He says, *nityavairiṇā*, by the constant enemy; *jñāninaḥ*, of the wise. For, an unwise man, after having regarded desire as a friend during the enjoyment of an object, knows its enmity when he experiences sorrow as its result (thus), 'I have been made sorrowful by desire', whereas a wise person knows even during enjoyment (thus), 'I have been forced into evil by this (desire).' So the discriminating person is smitten by sorrow during enjoyment as also during its consequence. Thus it is a constant enemy of the wise. Hence it surely has to be destroyed by him in every way. This is the meaning.

Then, what is its nature? Hence He says, *kāma-rūpeṇa*, in the form of desire; *Kāma* means desire, thirst; in the form of that which has that characteristic. By addressing him (Arjuna) as 'O son of Kuntī', He discloses His love.

Is it not that, even though it (desire) has to be destroyed by the discriminating man, it may be acceptable to the non-discriminating? Hence He says, *duṣpūreṇa analena ca*, which is like an insatiable fire. *Ca* stands as a word of comparison. *Anala*, fire, derivatively means 'that which has no (an) sufficiency (*alam*)'. As that fire cannot be satiated with oblation, so also (is not) this man by enjoyment. Hence, since it is constantly a cause of sorrow, therefore it should verily be destroyed even by the non-discriminating

man as much as by the discriminating one. And thus there is the *Smṛti*,

The desire of the sensual people does not ever become satiated through enjoyment. Like fire through clarified butter, it increases furthermore indeed².

Or: Since a wish is quenched through the acquisition of the wished object, therefore desire in the form of wish will cease by itself through the enjoyment of objects; why then is there so much insistence on this matter? Hence it is said, *duṣpūreṇa analena ca*, like an insatiable fire. Even though a wish may disappear for the time being on the acquisition of the object, yet since it appears again, therefore acquisition of an object is not a remover of desire. But it is only the perception of the defects in objects that is so. This is the idea.

When an enemy's abode is known, then he can be conquered easily. Hence He speaks of its abode:

इन्द्रियाणि मनो बुद्धिरस्याधिष्ठानमुच्यते।
एतैर्विमोहयत्येष ज्ञानमावृत्य देहिनम्॥

*Indriyāṇi mano buddhir-
asyādhīṣṭhānamucyate;
Etairvimohayatyeṣa jñānam-
āvṛtya dehinam. (3.40)*

The organs, mind, and intellect are said to be its abode. This one, by veiling knowledge, diversely deludes the embodied being with the help of these.

Indriyāṇi, the organs—the organs of hearing etc., which are the perceivers of sound, (tactile) sensations, form (colour), taste and odour, and the organs of action, viz. speech etc., which cause talking, grasp-

1. A different reading is, *āpātataḥ sukha-hetutvāt*.

2. *Manu-Smṛti*, 2.94; *Bhāgavatam*, 9.9.14.

ing, movement, defecation and orgasm; *manah*, mind, consisting of thoughts; and *buddhiḥ*, the intellect, consisting of judgement; are *ucyate*, said to be; *adhiṣṭhānam*, the abode, the shelter; *asya*, of this, of desire. Because, *eṣaḥ*, this one, desire; *āvṛtya*, by veiling; *jñānam*, knowledge, discriminating wisdom; *vimohayati*, deludes, in various ways; *dehinam*, the embodied one, the one who has identification with the body; *etaiḥ*, with the help of these, with the help of the organs which are engaged in their respective activities and are its abode.

Since this is so,—

तस्मात्त्वमिन्द्रियाण्यादौ नियम्य भरतर्षभ।
पाप्मानं प्रजहिह्येनं ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम्॥

Tasmāttvāmindriyāṇyādau
niyamya bharatarṣabha;
Pāpmānaṁ prajāhihyenaṁ
jñānavijñānanāśanam. (3.41)

Therefore, O scion of the Bharata dynasty,
after first controlling the organs, you
renounce this one which is sinful and a
destroyer of learning and wisdom.

Since desire, which has its abode in the organs, deludes an embodied being, *tasmāt*, therefore; *niyamya*, after controlling; *indriyāṇi*, the organs, ear etc.; *ādau*, first, before being deluded or before controlling desire—. For when they are controlled the control of the mind and the intellect also is accomplished, because thought and judgement become the causes of evil through the activities of the external organs. Hence, even after mentioning them earlier separately in, 'The organs, mind, and the intellect' (40), here (in the present verse) it is only said, 'the organs'; or, (by the word *indriyāṇi* in the present verse) they (mind and intellect) too, being organs, stand understood.

Bharatarṣabha, O scion of the Bharata dynasty, having been born in a great lineage you are capable of this. *Enam*, this one, desire, the enemy; *pāpmānam*, which is sinful, the root of all sins; *tvam*, you; *prajāhihi*, renounce; or, *prajāhi*, kill completely; and *hi*, manifestly, because the conclusion is made with 'kill the enemy' (43). *Jñāna* means the indirect knowledge arising from the instructions of the scriptures and the teachers; *vijñāna* is the direct knowledge that results from that. (*Jñāna-vijñāna-nāśanam* means) a destroyer of those two, *jñāna* and *vijñāna*, which are the causes of attaining the highest good.

Is it not that, even if it be possible to control the outer organs somehow, it is very difficult to give up internal hankering?

No, because it has already been stated in, 'Even the taste of this person falls away after realizing the Absolute' (2.59), that the realization of the supreme Reality is a means of rejecting hankering that is implied by the word *rasa*, taste.

In that case, who is that supreme One, on the realization of whom there is a cessation of hankering?

Anticipating this question He points out the pure Self, denoted by the word *para*, the supreme One, by distinguishing It from the body etc.:

इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः।
मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः॥

Indriyāṇi parāṇyāhur-
indriyebhyaḥ param manah;
Manasastu parā buddhir-
yo buddheḥ paratastu saḥ. (3.42)

They say that the organs are superior (to the gross body); the mind is superior to the

organs; but the intellect is superior to the mind. That which is superior to the intellect is that very One.

As compared with the gross, insentient, limited and external body, *āhuh*, they, the learned persons or the Śrutis say: that *indriyāṇi*, the organs, the five sense-organs, viz. the ear etc.; are *parāṇi*, superior, because of being subtle, being the revealers, being pervasive, and being located inside. So also, *manah*, the mind, which consists of reflection and doubt; is *param*, superior; *indriyebhyaḥ*, to the organs, being their impeller. Similarly, *buddhiḥ*, the intellect, which consists of judgement; is *tu*, however; *parā*, superior; *manasaḥ*, to the mind, because judgement is the same as certitude, (and) such functions of the mind as reflection, (doubt) etc. are preceded by it (judgement). *Yah*, that which; is *parataḥ*, superior; *buddheḥ*, to the intellect; which exists as its illuminator, and about which embodied one it has been said that, desire, associated with its abodes, the organs etc., deludes by covering knowledge, is *sah tu*, that very One, the supreme Self, the witness of the intellect. As in the text, 'That one which is this (Self) has entered here (into these bodies)'³, (so here also) the embodied one, though separated (from *buddhi* by *Mahat* and *Avyakta*), is referred to by the pronoun *tat* (i.e. *sah*, that one). With regard to this idea there is the Śruti,

The sense-objects are higher than the senses, and the mind is higher than the sense-objects; but the intellect is higher than the mind, and the Great Soul is higher than the intellect.

The Unmanifested is higher than the *Mahat*; the *Puruṣa* is higher than the Unmanifested. There is nothing higher than the *Puruṣa*. He is the culmination, He is the highest goal⁴.

Since here the supremacy of the Self itself is the subject-matter forming the purport of the text, and since the superiority of the organs etc. is not what is intended, therefore in place of the statement, 'the sense-objects are higher than the senses'⁵, the utterance of the Lord that the organs are superior to the objects is not contradicted, because of the difference in the manner of presentation. As compared with the intellect, with the individual intellects of ours and others, the *mahān-ātmā*, the Great Soul, in the form of the aggregate of all the intellects, is higher. This follows from the saying in the *Vāyupurāṇa*, 'Mind, the great, understanding, *Brahmā*, the Pū, intellect, Manifestor, God (are all synonyms of Mahat)'⁶

The Unmanifested, the Undifferentiated, the seed of the entire creation, called *Māyā*, as mentioned in the Śruti, 'One should know that Nature (*Prakṛti*) is surely *Māyā*'⁷ and, 'This (universe) was then undifferentiated'⁸, is superior as compared with Mahat, the (cosmic) intellect (the Great Soul), *Hiraṇyagarbha*. As compared with the Unmanifested, the Person, the Whole, the Self, the Illuminator of all insentient things as a class is superior. Lest someone should think, 'There may be some other thing superior even to That', the Śruti says, 'There is nothing higher than the *Puruṣa* (Person)'⁹. Why is this so? Because He (the Person) is the culmination, the end, being the basis of all things. The meaning is: That Itself is the highest goal that is well known from such Śruti texts as, 'He is the highest goal'¹⁰, 'he attains the end of the road; and that is the highest place of Viṣṇu'¹¹. All this

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Vārtika*, 1.4.27.

7. *Śvetāsvatara-Upaniṣad*, 4.10.

8. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad*, 1.4.7.

9. *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad*, 1.3.11.

10. *Ibid.*

11. *op. cit.* 1.3.9.

3. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad*, 1.4.7.

4. *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad*, 1.3.10-11.

has been expressed by 'That which is superior to the intellect is that very One.'

He (the Lord) states the significant outcome:

एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्वा संस्तभ्यात्मानमात्मना।
जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम्॥

*Evam buddheḥ param buddhvā
saṁstabhyātmānamātmanā
Jahi śatrum mahābāho
kāmarūpam durāsadam. (3.43)*

By realizing that which is thus superior to the intellect, (and by) completely establishing the mind with the help of the intellect, O mighty-armed one, kill the enemy in the form of desire, which is difficult to apprehend.

Buddhvā, by realizing; that which is evam, thus, that which is implied by the word para in 'Even the taste of this person

falls away after realizing the Absolute' (2.59), the Whole, the Self; which is param, superior; buddheḥ, to the intellect; (and) saṁstabhyā, completely establishing; ātmānam, the mind; ātmanā, with the help of this kind of intellect, which is of the nature of certitude; mahābāho, O mighty-armed one—the address is apt because it is only for a mighty-armed one that killing an enemy is easy; jahi, kill; śatrum, the enemy, the destroyer of all human goals; kāmarūpam, in the form of desire; and which is durāsadam, difficult to apprehend. It is possessed of many peculiarities that are difficult to understand. Hence the adjective is for evoking great effort.

The means, steadfastness in Action, has been primarily summed up here. But steadfastness in Knowledge, the goal, has been presented in connection with it in a secondary way.

(Madhusudana Saraswati's Annotation on the third chapter of the Gītā ends here.)

NOTE

The above serial will be discontinued hereafter; for, happily, the Advaita Ashrama hopes to publish by the end of this year the complete translation of the Annotation in the form of a book. Nevertheless, since some of the PB readers have appreciated the series, we shall try continuing to include in our pages portions of the Annotation that are of general interest, e.g., those on meditation, God's grace, etc.—Ed.

Unpublished Letters *

श्री श्री रामकृष्णो जयति

Jeypore
22-12-95

My dear Jwaladuttjee,

We are extremely delighted to receive your letter. In future you need not register your letters, for letters sent by ordinary post duly reach me.

As far as I know, Mr. Sturdy has become the disciple of Swami Vivekananda. Swamijee has now returned to America. His work in England proved a greater success than what he had expected. He thinks that the doctrines of the Vedanta Philosophy will take better root in England than in America. So he intends to come again to England by the next summer and stay there. We hope that he will do much more work there on his return.

As for the *uktis*, Swami Gangadhar has translated into Hindi the rest of the *uktis*, but we have not got sufficient time to compare his rendering with the original. We quite agree with you in your plan of recasting the style of the manuscript before it goes to the press. Moreover, some additions and alterations are necessary. Therefore we have at present postponed the idea of sending the manuscript as it is to the press for publication. We wish that you will see it once more before it goes to the press.

I am glad to learn that you are trying your best to struggle hard for spiritual development. Don't think of the result, but constantly pray and struggle on and on. Let this be your motto कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन, etc. and सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज etc.

As regards your health we are sorry to learn that the medicines of the Kabiraj have not produced any substantial good. You should write letters to the Kabiraj describing clearly all the symptoms of your disease; but if you can once see him that would be the best no doubt. You should also look to your health, for excessive labour is the root of all diseases, and it is for this reason you are suffering from nervous weakness and other diseases. You should try to give perfect rest for a few months. Give up the habit of reading at night the books of your profession even.

I am now suffering a little from cough and cold. But Swami Nirmalananda and Swami Gangadhar are now doing well. I intend to go within 3 or 4 days to Ajmere & Pushkar and thence I will start for N.W.P. May the blessings of Bhagawan Ramakrishna Deb always attend on you and may He bestow happiness and peace on your mind is my constant prayer. Our best love and good wishes to you. Hoping this will find you in good health. I remain your well wishing,

Avedananda



* See the May '96 PB for the first lot of similar letters, and our note there.—Ed.

Math, Belur.
28th Feb, '98.

My dear Joshiji,

I have received your M.O. of Rs. 16/- duly. I have also received your Drishtanta Samuchchaya (25 copies). Please write all your letters to the following address, for our Math has been removed here from Alambazar. I am all right. Hope you are doing well. My love to you. Yours truly,

Jogananda

Jwalla Dutt Joshi,
Pleader, High Court,
Allahabad, N.W.P.



Madras
. Triplicane
Brahmavadin Office.

My dear Panditji,

Your letter of the 25th February duly reached me redirected from Calcutta. Perhaps you have not received my previous letter, otherwise you would not have addressed me to Calcutta. Lately I came to know from G.G. that the sayings & the short life of Guru Maharaj in Hindi are still with Lala Badri Sah. You just write a letter to him to send them to you at his earliest convenience. I too am just now writing a letter to him to that effect. I have not as yet seen the Hindi translations which you have published, for I have been staying here at Madras nearly six months. I will write to our Calcutta Math to send our copy to Swami Abhedananda. Swami Sadananda is now at Calcutta.

I have been requested by the manager of the Brahmavadin to ask a favour of you which I hope you will not fail to deny (to give?). The manuscript in English of the sayings of Guru Maharaj which he had here is lost. He will deem it a great favour if you spare your own copy with its index & table of contents.

I am glad to learn that you have published something about our Guru Maharaj in Hindi. How are you keeping your health nowadays? Is the swelling in your armpit cured?

I am doing well here. With love & Namaskars, trusting this will find you in good health,

3rd March 1898

Yours
Nirmalananda



6/7/96

High View
Caversham,
Reading

My dear Jwala Dutt,

I was glad to receive your letter of June 11th. I feel sure that you have acted wisely in severing your connection with the T.S.¹ and associating yourself with those sannyasins & others who have the true tradition of India.

Swami Vivekananda's work in this country has been of the very first importance & it has by no means reached its full scope yet. His wonderfully quick perception of Western ways of thought and his genius in adapting Eastern thought to it has given him great power. Personally I have learnt more from him than from anybody else and I feel that he is a pure good man who is himself growing as well as teaching all the time. Therefore I am giving *man dān*² in this work.

Swami believes in no secrets or sham mysteries. What a man asks for that let him have if he can take it, & we can give it & let him adapt it as he best can. Therefore I have no knowledge my good friend & brother that I will not hand over to you, share with you, if you draw it out of me. Therefore no vows & no pledge of secrecy. The whole secret is in your own heart and it cannot be divulged because it is नेति नेति.

You must know more of the rules & the necessity of *yama*, *niyama* & *āsana* than I do. Anyhow you know enough. *Prānāyāma* too you are sure to understand and the necessity of its being preceded by *nādi suddhi* for perhaps a month to free the lungs and purify the nerves.

These all help very much indeed towards the true practice of yoga, and the T.S. in India and elsewhere has been generally foolish in discouraging them. One might as well discourage wholesome food and exercise. But there is nobody in the T.S. as far as I know who knows anything of yoga.

Now yoga begins with *pratyāhāra*. What do we want to do?

We want to control the changing mind, go behind it and find the real state. How to start? After practice of the preliminaries before, meantime act as follows. Sit and watch the constant changing of the mind, make no effort to control them, let them run on, one rising out of the other in endless sequence, but *remember all the time* that *you*, the 'I' in you, is watching them as a mere spectator, not identifying yourself with them. This will be troublesome at first and you will keep on being yourself and mixing yourself up with your thoughts and reminiscences, but gradually after a month's practice morning and evening you will be able to keep the memory that you are simply a disinterested spectator. Whether they be lustful thoughts, envious thoughts, angry or idle thoughts, it will not matter, you will find yourself too that these *vrittis*³ are mere phenomena arising in your mind and presented to the 'I' for its observation.

Then a new thing begins to happen. Reminiscences, desires and other thoughts cannot

(Continued on page 428)

1. Theosophical Society.

2. lit. gifting one's mind; that is, assisting someone with one's mind or suggestions etc.

3. Mental modifications.

Religion and Diversity

DR. HUSTON SMITH

What follows is the transcript of a talk by Dr. Smith, a leading figure in the study of comparative religions. For fifteen years he was Professor of Philosophy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; his other major appointments were at Washington University in St. Louis, Syracuse University, N.Y., and the University of California, Berkeley.

He was the first speaker at the (October) 1993 Ahimsa Conference on 'Finding Unity in Diversity—A Dialogue on Religion, Science and Social Action', held in San Francisco. Swami Prabuddhananda, Spiritual Leader, Vedanta Society of Northern California, kindly supplied us the tapes. Transcripts of the talks of the other speakers shall appear in the following PB issues.

We were invited, if we were disposed, to preface our statements with a chant; and I do feel so disposed. so, I shall lead off with my favourite short chant which is from the Upanishads:

*Asato mā sadgamaya;
Tamaso mā jyotirgamaya;
Mr̥tyormā amṛtaṁ gamaya;
Om̐, Śānti, śānti, śāntiḥ.
Hari Om̐ Tat Sat.*

*Lead us from the unreal to the real;
Lead us from darkness to light;
Lead us from death to immortal life;
Peace, peace, peace.*

A couple of quick business items before I get under way. I regret that I can't be here tomorrow. University of California Extension has had me signed up for San Francisco. I very much regret because it looks like a splendid programme.

Second, I am carrying a satchel of my books which I will be happy to pass on as a professional courtesy at the offered discount—they are over there—see me during the break, if you are interested. I hope the others have done the same. (*Laughter.*)

Now, I have been asked to speak on religion and diversity, and let me begin with a confession. We all know, an honest confession is good for the soul. We also know it's pretty bad for the reputation! But never mind—I'll go ahead. When this topic was proposed to me, I of course said 'yes'—how could I have said 'no'? The Conference deals with coping with diversity, and my beat is more or less religion. So I said 'yes'. But frankly, my spirit drooped. This is the confession. I have been through this topic so many times over the years that I run out of ways to discuss it that won't put *me* to sleep, much less you!

We all know the standard litany: point one, religion has to do with unity. The very word 'religio' means to re-bind; re-bind us to our fellow human beings; re-bind us to the Ultimate.

But—point two—religions have tragically betrayed their calling: witch hunts, inquisitions, jihads, crusades—all adding up to Cardinal Newman's near despairing cry, 'Oh, how we hate one another for the love of God!'

Number three: having chided the relig-

ions for their lapses, with of course a side-swipe at the fundamentalists who think that theirs is the only way—then we turn to exhortation. Now, I don't say that there is nothing to this scenario; I don't say it's totally vacuous. There is a place in life for confession of the sins of religion and exhortation to do better. But the question remains: is there anything that can be said on the subject that isn't obvious? In the course of preparing these remarks I've come to believe that there *is* something. It's so un-obvious in fact that there hasn't been time in the last month and a half for me to get on top of it, as will become evident as you listen to me stammer a good bit in the closing section of what I have to say. But say this for what follows: it will not be dull—at least not to me.

I'll just wave aloft two books: Daniel Patrick Moynihan's *Pandemonium*, and—just arrived this week—Mark Jergene-Myer (whom I proudly followed in religious studies here in the University of California) has just come out with a blockbusting book, *The New Cold War: Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular States*. It will take me a number of months to digest the amount of pertinent and crucial information and ideas in these two books.

Now, for my time though, I have four points. First, my topic—I'll remind you—is religion and diversity. First this issue is stated theoretically and then I'll move onto this issue stated practically. Then I will go into specifically the bearing and the role of religion as it figures in contemporary instances of conflict, and finally, very briefly, discuss—what can we do?

First, then, the issue stated theoretically: unity-in-diversity is, I am tempted to say, the ultimate question. It is the name of the game. We live in a chaos—let's just say diversity, that is also, at the same time,

one—a unity, a cosmos. That is to say, we live in a world of particulars: tables, chairs. But, as Geoffrey Chew will say tomorrow—his very subject-title says it—, if everything in the universe were to disappear except this lecturn, this lecturn would disappear too, because it is totally—it is particular, but it is totally—dependent on the whole.

Now, if that's the nature of reality as it is, the problem that is built into this nature of things is the balance between part and whole. And, as I say, that can almost be said to be *the* problem of life. It's so difficult in fact to secure this balance that it's encouraging to know that at least one person is balanced—at least one in one thousand. However, if balance in the universe were to be lost, then we wouldn't have a universe at all. Either we would collapse into one homogenized pellet, or we would fly apart in total disintegration. So it is done right in the universe. But when we come to ourselves, it's very difficult for us to get the balance just right.

In psychology we face the question of ego boundaries. If our ego boundaries are too porous, then we don't have a firm identity—then we have problems. On the other hand, if our ego boundaries are too firm and we will not let others in, again we have problems of the opposite side. In marriage we enter into a unity, but, as we know, the main problem of this unity is how to keep our distinct individuality in the context of that unity. Right on cue there arrived today our issue of *Modern Maturity*. Here is the cartoon that was scripted for my point: A gentleman coming home, stooping a bit from a day at the office, meeting his wife says: 'Everything still revolving around *you*, dear?!' There's the story, you know, how to secure the right balance. Now that's the theoretical approach to the question of unity and diversity. As I say, it is built into the very

nature of existence and constitutes, one can say, I think, without exaggeration in one sense, the presiding problem of our lives. How to work out the razor's edge on this issue?

Now let me turn to the issue in practical terms—speaking of it in practical terms. In the last hundred years the 'greatest danger' in our world has changed three times. In the 19th century and up to 1917 the greatest danger was *nationalism*. With the victory of the communist revolution, however, it changed to *ideology*, as nations lined up on the opposite sides of the Cold War. But now with the collapse of communism as an ideology, a third danger has moved to the front. This danger is *ethnicity*.

Nations don't seem much disposed to go to war anymore—the risk is too great. And ideology again is losing its force. I've

role. Language figures; race figures; collective memory figures. What is religion's role?

Let me introduce it, since we are speaking on Gandhi's birthday—in India today, already it is Gandhi's birthday. So we are speaking on him. On January 30th, 1948, as we know, a fellow Hindu, Godse, bowed reverentially to Gandhi and then shot him to death. As he fell, Gandhi raised his hand in a gesture of forgiveness. In performing these acts of chivalry, both acted in the name of religion and, interestingly, in the name of the same religion! Now, how are we to understand a religion when it embraces both victim and assassin? Now, I won't give you a complete answer. I cannot. But to me [it seems] we can work on that a little bit.

To unpack this incident and understand the bearing of religion on the dominant nature of our times—namely, ethnic-

In the 19th century and up to 1917 the greatest danger was nationalism. With the victory of the communist revolution, however, it changed to ideology, as nations lined up on the opposite sides of the Cold War. But now with the collapse of communism as an ideology, a third danger has moved to the front. This danger is ethnicity.

heard that capitalism is growing faster in China today than anywhere else—remarked an economist. Meanwhile ethnic groups fight all the time, more and more. It looks like it's ethnicity—or in India the word is communalism; so it's ethnicity or communalism—that makes the world go round, and bleed and bleed. In many places in the world the urgent question is not who are you but what are you? Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim? And if you give a wrong answer, there's a good chance that you will be shot.

Now to my third point. If ethnicity has become the dominant, paramount danger of our time, what is religion's role in this? It obviously has a role, but it is not the only

ity—let me propose an image. It's a new image for me. Religion stands to ethnic groups as souls stand to individuals. If we didn't have different souls—that is to say, if we were not distinct separate individuals, we could not quarrel, we could not collide. And yet it is not our distinctiveness that causes our quarrels and our conflicts.

I'll work in one small memory. When I was at Syracuse (N.Y.) at the height of a Middle East crisis—one of the flaming incidents there—I received an afternoon call. Would I come and speak to a Political Science course on the Middle East? Of course, for collegiality I said 'yes'. And yet I went to that class with such dragging steps, because I knew I couldn't tell them what they hoped

that I could tell them—namely, that it was differences between Judaism and Islam that were the cause of the problem; differences which if set straight by understanding would diffuse the situation. In point of fact, theologically Islam is so close to Judaism that no one could have been more surprised than Mohammed when the Jews did not accept him as one of their prophets.

It's true that when religious divisions first occur—when Christianity phased out of Judaism, and Islam phased out of both of them—, in the initial generation religious differences *are* the causes. But after that—I'll overstate it just a little bit—you know Muslims in India and Hindus in India—, they don't care what the others believe. I remember, when the Pope went to India and created crowds greater than Denver, and a reporter asked a bystander—'You are a Hindu. How can you be so enthusiastic about the Pope?', the person said, 'O, I am an Indian. We believe everything!' Well, it's almost the truth. Certainly, they don't care what the other people believe. It is the collective memories of these two distinct communities and the bad things that each have done to themselves in the course of history—atrocities unavenged—, and on the other side of that is the sense of vulnerability.

That's what causes a conflict, and we waste our time, really maybe I'm overstating it, in looking for religious differences as the cause for the friction. Well, what do we do? I have no panaceas. Fortunately, I'm the first speaker—those who come now have time for that.

Just two small points: I've spoken of the balance between unity and individuality, our collective life, shared life, and our individuality. Though we tend of course, to put ourselves first and accentuate ourselves and

We can look to our commonality—be aware of the differences that blind us to the similarities that bind us.

our beliefs and views, so in a small way we can accentuate our commonality. There are five billion human beings on this earth. Everyone is different from every other. Yet, we all have one nose, one mouth, two eyes, two ears. We can look to our commonality—be aware of the differences that blind us to the similarities that bind us. Second, no panacea, but we can do small things—like Ahimsa is doing with this conference. The big picture is beyond us—but we can do helpful loving acts of kindness to one another. Thank you. □

As long as a man analyses with the mind, he cannot reach the Absolute. As long as you reason with your mind, you have no way of getting rid of the universe and the objects of the senses—form, taste, smell, touch, and sound. When reasoning stops, you attain the Knowledge of Brahman. Atman cannot be realized through this mind; Atman is realized through Atman alone.

—*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, 14 July 1885

The Cultic Mindset

RICHARD CHAMBERS PRESCOTT

Current trends in all those societies that are becoming or have become diverse in culture, religion, etc. point to the destructive power of closed human minds. The promising antidote appears to lie in pluralism. Better still, pleads the author in this stimulating article, is for people to cultivate a spiritually open mind: 'The point might be that within each individual is the real potential to transcend all these belief systems and become someone who is not systematized by any belief.'

Prescott, from Edmonds, U.S.A., is an occasional contributor to the PB for the past several years.

The word 'cult' comes from *cultus*, meaning 'to worship'. Worship means to honour or value something, a principle or person, which is worthy. Essentially, the cultic mental attitude is any belief system which excludes other systems of belief. Much falls into this category—everything from the great world religions to any person's sharp mid-point of viewing the world which denies other systems of perception or manners in which the diversity of people give worth to their lives.

Really, the cultic vision is rather abusive and vicious in the psychological sense, for it denies other people's realities. Whenever there is abuse there is anger, trouble, and so forth between two people, two nations, or two religious systems. The tendency is there in everyone to see things only from their own sharp mid-point, their own centre.

Few of us can maintain the universal outlook which does not deny the personal truth of another's reality. A single dot on a blank page is an example of how much one person might understand what is going on in another's mind. With this thought we might gradually hope to learn to accept a non-controlling attitude towards others' mid-points.

One system attacks another, then that one attacks back, either intellectually or at

the level of visceral combat. It becomes a vicious recycling of negativity. An eye is taken for an eye and the teeth, too. This is an unhealthy response, an archaic method of controlling thoughts and feelings. Some of us might just want to give away for the sake of peace (forgive) and let live. If you are one who says Allah is better than Christ or Christ is better than Atma (spiritual self), that attitude arises out of a cultic mindset, universally accepted but nevertheless isolating, separative, and exclusive.

The attitude extends wide and far, limiting us all. It is the world-mind cultus, seeing value and worth solely through the centre of one's own sharp mid-point.

A Christian will say that the Shinto religion is invalid because its followers worship the spirit of their ancestors. The Shinto may reply that Jesus is not physically present so what a Christian worships is a spirit, too. Heat rises.

The Christian replies that Kojiki and Nihonji, the founders of Shinto, are mythological people with no historical evidence of their existence. The followers of Shinto do not worship the resurrected Christ, so they are invalid. The Shinto replies that according to the letter of an Essene to Alexandria, Jesus did not die on the cross. They took his body from the tomb, still bleeding—a corpse does not bleed—to one of many secret

Essene caves where he lived for six more months and then passed away peacefully.

The point is not who is correct, but that the sharp mid-points of various belief systems are found to be in continual conflict. On and on the war continues and there is no peace. This is the problem of the world-mind cultus. Very few practise the universal viewpoint. Most people have firmly negated other thought systems from the 'get-go. Closed minds. Lack of synthesizing all possibilities.

Our cognitive conception of history may be turned topsy-turvy with the opening of the secret chamber below the foot of the newly-estimated 17,000 year-old Sphinx. This will conflict with the premise of human history according to some belief systems, but it will also enhance the depth of the connection we have with our real past. The mid-point of our perception, of what we are, is constantly changing at this level, even so at the level of profound insight into what we are spiritually. Openness is always necessary for the joy of assimilating universal information.

We have all managed to brainwash each other quite successfully, reducing the capacity for universal consciousness in one another simply by saying, 'No, that cannot be so'. By the custom of denying another person's reality, narrowness has become a habituated practice of the human mind. With over one hundred billion neurons bouncing around in the brain we come up with quite a number of ideas about God. But which idea has ever completely understood the infinite? Many billions or trillions is not even close to the infinite.

It seems to me that as human beings the best we can get is a real emotional knowledge of life. Like the song says, 'The best thing we can learn is to love and be loved in return'. The tendency of the complicated analytical mind blocks the beautiful simplicity of this feeling. Love, which is God or Goddess, as so many have said who had

some emotional grasp of what it is to become a genuine human being.

In the precious realm of the human heart, the state of marriage has suffered greatly due to these sharp mid-points. Wives and husbands are most often like two

Really, the cultic vision is rather abusive and vicious in the psychological sense, for it denies other people's realities. Whenever there is abuse there is anger, trouble, and so forth between two people, two nations, or two religious systems.

battling camps at covert warfare within the same fortress. It is sad to admit that we rarely see a couple who practises equi-pollence (equal-weightedness) with one another. Isn't marriage supposed to be this: two people standing side-by-side equally protecting, cherishing, and helping each other within the sacred fortress of marriage? One does not serve the other; two serve each other equally. If it is not that then why pretend it is when it is nothing less than emotional hypocrisy?

One definition of spiritual freedom is that it just naturally sets in when we get rid of shame; hatred; fear; social arrogance; the ego's self-righteous pride; secretiveness or the concealment of true emotion; masking; manipulation; control; hesitation or suppressing genuine, natural feeling; the idea that one might be good, better, or superior to others; and grief, depression, sadness, the blues. Spiritual liberation or salvation, if you like, might simply be a process of emotional deconstructing or deprogramming until all feeling is reduced to the most primary feeling which is, of course, love. Mind you, it is a love mixed with wisdom, not foolish, fanatical madness. Nor is it reckless or harmful to self or others, because if love is the first and final construct of all emotional life, then cherishing, loving, and protecting life just comes up as a natural response to this feel-

ing.

Truthfully, happiness which equals love has no cause. It is something that is always there—innate and natural to the human soul—but it is not produced by the cause-and-effect reasoning process. But then one says, 'I want something. I want an egg-roll or a palace on a hill. Then I shall be happy.' If you examine this comment you may see the deeper comment: 'If I get this desired thing, then I shall allow myself to be happy.' That happiness was always there; you have just put a condition on it in order for it to shine.

I find myself being spontaneously happy at times for no reason, but when I try to figure and explain this feeling to myself it starts to slip away. Perhaps this is why the Chinese poet referred to this sentiment as the 'illusive bird of happiness'.

Happiness, love and joy might just come up when one simplifies complexity; not necessarily the external world complexity, but internal complexity, thought, and feeling. Thoughts are wonderful, but if you think about it, thoughts moving over the neural channels are experienced in the brain;

Spiritual liberation or salvation, if you like, might simply be a process of emotional deconstructing or deprogramming until all feeling is reduced to the most primary feeling which is, of course, love.

emotion is felt throughout the entire body including the mind and soul. In jarring consciousness out of esoteric difficulty it seems a good thing to bring all that neural activity down into the heart. There, one has simplified complexity.

A modern problem is that scientifically, psychologically, mystically, and spiritually we have all become so very complicated. In so many ways this causes the loss of insight into the simple beauty of spiritual life and what it is to be truly human and awakened.

Most religions have started out as cults. Christianity was a secretive cult that worshipped Christ in caves and catacombs hidden from the public eye for reasons all too well-known. They identified each other by the secret symbol of the fisherman of souls.

Historically speaking, cults have had both positive and negative influences, and within a cult both dark and benevolent effects may be found. In the cult of the goddess Kali, which in the broader sense is the tantric spiritual tradition, one may find the dual effects. Thugs used the image of Kali as a focus point for their dirty deeds. But one of the most beautiful souls to bless the face of this planet, Ramakrishna, worshipped the goddess Kali in the most tender, loving, and gentle way, never harming a single soul in any shape or form.

The cult of the god Dionysius also has both sides of the possibility. The cyclic celebration of the procreative, death and rebirth (resurrection) of the god principle gave birth to the tragic and comedic drama forms of today as well as the Orphic mysteries of the afterworld. On the other hand, the phallic worship associated with these rituals may indeed have led to a libidiously-focussed mindset in some who did not take in the whole picture.

The cult of Aphrodite could have been nothing but beneficial to the culture of the time, raising not only acknowledgement and recognition of the sacred feminine, but the worship of the same in the goddess herself and the form of all women. The only negative potential there was may have been the possibility of girls and women being forced into sacred prostitution. To force anything on anyone is in no way a sacred thing.

The worship of a principle or person may be abusive or a blessing depending on the intention, either liberating or oppressing. Any belief system that diminishes another person's freedom of individuality, their independent capacity to think and feel, their family love and relations; or which

creates isolation, exclusivity, denial, and superiority is an obvious negative cultic system.

Simply, if people are expanding with openness, love, kindness, and knowledge then it is most likely a good belief system they are embracing. If you see people not growing, becoming stagnant, isolated, hateful, superstitious, controlling, manipulative, abusive (sexually, emotionally, or financially), antagonistic, or arrogant to the point of increasing narrow egotistical viewpoints, well, there is your clear signal to head for the hills.

Cult leaders, gurus who consider themselves to be god and self-proclaimed incarnations of Jesus, are suspicious people of mean intelligence. 'He who says he is a guru is a man of mean intelligence,' said Ramakrishna. Such persons think themselves better, higher, heavier than others. The metaphorical meaning is that if one thinks of oneself heavier than others, they go down and pull others with them. It is the phenomena of people being manipulated by a dominating personality which squashes individual creative spiritual capacity.

I once heard a South Indian guru cult leader say, 'There is no escape.' Now if what he meant was there is no escape from the beauty of truth, then that is quite nice. But it did not seem so, for many clone-like people, lost in mimicry, were the fruit of his tree. One should be cautious of having no escape from such dominating personalities.

A unique and remarkable individual, Ted 'Black Lightning' Patrick, is one of the original deprogrammers in this country. After having nearly lost his child to one of the more vicious Jesus cults, he began his practice of deconditioning minds that had lost their sense of self due to cultic phenomena. His method is to challenge their belief system, to open new possibilities of interpretation of that thought system by questioning it in regard to the greater spectrum. Essentially, he passionately works to restore

the cult-persuaded individual to gain independent thinking and feeling.

This is not so different from John Lennon's fearless musical statements in the song, 'I Found Out':

'Now that I showed you what you can do, there ain't no Jesus gonna come from the sky, now that I found out I know I can cry,' and 'Just keep you crazy with nothing to do, keep you occupied with pie in the sky, there ain't no guru who can see through your eyes.'

In the process of restoring or gaining for the first time the blessed capacity for independent thinking and feeling, there are two stages: snapping and floating. Snap-

After having nearly lost his child to one of the more vicious Jesus cults, he began his practice of deconditioning minds that had lost their sense of self due to cultic phenomena.

ping, of course, is coming out of the restrictive narrowness of that former collective belief system and the individual's self sense comes back. Floating is when the mind returns to the mental and emotional phenomena of that belief system.

Really, in the greater paradox of the world mind, we all now and then snap and float. At one moment we all snap, experiencing some greater insight into what it's all about. Then we float back to the doubting mind thinking, 'No, no, life is just the daily grind.' The point might be that within each individual is the real potential to transcend all these belief systems and become someone who is not systematized by any belief. That is to become a free-thinker, who can feel independent of the world-mind cultus. Like everything, the paradox of being a human being has both sides to it. Two sides to every coin. For example, in an attempt to comprehend what exactly happens at an Alcoholic Anonymous meeting, some psychologists have labelled the group a charis-

matic healing cult. 'Charisma' means 'grace, spiritual power, or influence'. In this regard they may be correct, for the A.A. philosophy does indeed say that no human power can save a person from what they are powerless over. Only God, the higher power, the great reality, can do that.

But A.A. does not define the understanding of that principle for anyone. Any and every belief system of any individual is equally accepted: atheistic, agnostic, psychological, religious, and purely spiritual. So it cannot be defined as a cult which traditionally builds its own belief system to the exclusion of others. A.A. has actually helped

people regain a fully human life, free of the illness of alcoholism. So popular is its healing method (the Twelve Steps), that in its wake other so-called healing cults have come up: for overeating, narcotics, sexual addiction, psychiatric and emotional traumas, and obsessive-compulsive disorders to mention just a few.

If you find yourself limited by the belief system presented herein, I sincerely hope that the thought content of this, my own sharp mid-point, will burst the effect of the world-mind cultus and it will no longer persuade you. □

Unpublished Letters

(Continued from page 419)

live on and then transform themselves into endless varieties unless you as 'I' are *interested* in them. Your becoming the mere spectator, instead of merging yourself in them, does not serve them. They cannot go on transforming; because you give them no life, they droop and die. So, after a time, the rapidity with which they transform decreases. Soon they begin to arise very slowly and weakly, and strengthen a little. But you are strong in the memory all the time of being divorced from them, only an onlooker. They can't but die. Soon you will have a peculiar consciousness come, that now a thought is going to arise. And by turning away your interest it dies in the mind, stillborn, and does not come into manifestation in the mind or transform into anything. After a time your mind will have no transformation or change arise in it. You will remain the percipient of a calm ocean of mind without changes. You have then completed your *pratyāhāra*.

Practise this well, for it is the solid foundation which will bring you easily to *dhāraṇa*, *dhyāna* & *samādhi*.

You are a strong man. Someday, perhaps, after you have met somebody you will become a sannyāsi. India needs men like you, strong and honest to take sannyāsa and keep the sacred knowledge in evidence not by talk but by action.

I will send you Nārada Sūtra & Swāmi's Raja Yoga together in a few weeks when the latter is out; it is already in the printer's hands. Give my kind remembrances to my friends in Almora—to Bhairav Dutt, Bhadri Shah and others. I do not know whether in this body the ātman in them will ever again meet the ātman here.

Yours in सत्
Edward Sturdy



Ten Verses On the Divine Experiences of Devi Roop Bhavani

Translated by

MS APARNA DAR*

बूयो न बीजम् तूयो न तीजम्
वायो न आकाशं अथाह सर्व सर्वम्
नहि ब्रह्माण्डं नच खात्म आत्मम्
शक्ति स्वरूपम् परं ब्रह्म सोऽहम् ॥१

*Būyo na bijam tūyo na tijam
vāyo na ākāśam athāha sarva sarvam
nahi brahmāṇḍam naca khātma ātmam
śakti svarūpam param brahma so'ham. (1)*

बूयो, *būyo*—to sow; बीजम्, *bijam*—seed; न, *na*—not; तूयो, *tūyo*—water; तीजम्, *tijam*—radiance; energy; fire; वायो, *vāyo*—wind; आकाशं, *ākāśam*—atmosphere, air; अथाह, *athāha*—limitless, whose depth cannot be measured; सर्व सर्वम्, *sarva sarvam*—everything, everywhere; all-pervading omnipresent. नच नहि, *naca nahi*—not; ब्रह्माण्डं, *brahmāṇḍam*—universe; खात्म, *khātma*—complete; आत्मम्, *ātmam*—soul; शक्ति, *śakti*—Shakti, a name of the Divine Mother Durga, the Creative Power of Brahman; स्वरूपम्, *svarūpam*—nature; परं, *param*—supreme; ब्रह्म, *brahma*—Brahman, God, the divine source of the universe; सोऽहम्, *so'ham*—I am one with the Supreme.

(I who am) the Atman cannot be sown as a seed (in the cycle of creation). The Atman is not water or fire; nor is it the elements of wind and air; the Atman is limitless, all-pervading and omnipresent.

The Atman is not of the nature of the

universe, nor is it limited to one's own soul.

The Atman is of the nature of Divine Shakti. I who am the Atman have become one with the supreme Brahman.

पुरुषो न पुरुषात् विमर्शो न मर्शात्
वर्नातीतो शान्त अन्दर् आकाशम्
सूक्ष्मो न विस्तार न पर व्यापारम्
सु अन्तदारम् परं ब्रह्म सोऽहम् ॥२

*Puruṣo na puruṣāt vimarśo na vimarśāt
varnātito śānta andar ākāśam
sūkṣmo na vistāra na para vyāpāram
su antadāram param brahma so'ham. (2)*

पुरुषो, *puruṣo*—man; पुरुषात्, *puruṣāt*—vigour (of manhood); विमर्शो, *vimarśo*—consideration, examination; मर्शात्, *marśāt*—critical reasoning; वर्नातीतो, *varnātito*—past all class and caste; शान्त, *śānta*—peaceful; अन्दर् आकाशम्, *andar ākāśam*—inner space (Akasha) known through meditation; सूक्ष्मो, *sūkṣmo*—thin, minute, small, contracted; विस्तार, *vistāra*—expand, spacious, large; व्यापारम्, *vyāpāram*—occupation, profession; अन्तदारम्, *antadāram*—present within the heart; परं ब्रह्म सोऽहम्, *param brahma so'ham*—I am one with the supreme Brahman.

The Atman is neither a Purusha (man) nor the vigour of manhood; the Atman is beyond the reach of all consideration and reasoning.

The Atman is beyond limitations of caste and class; It is very peaceful, and is

* Please see her biographical sketch of the Devi in the April '96 PB and our note there.

located in the inner Space.

The Atman is neither minute nor is It spread out; the Atman has no occupation.

The Atman is present within oneself. I who am the Atman have become one with the supreme Brahman.

थावर न जंगम नह चतुर्वर्णम्
जग न चराचर तथ् परमकारम्
सथ् न असथ अछिन्नदारम्
सूख्मो समाधि परं ब्रह्म सोऽहम् ॥३॥

*Thāvara na jamgama nah caturvarṇam
jaga na carācara tath paramakāram
sath na asatha achinnadāram
sūkhmo samādhi param brahma so'ham. (3)*

थावर, *thāvara*—fixed, immovable; जंगम, *jamgama*—movable; चतुर्वर्णम्, *catur-varṇam*—four castes (Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shūdra); जग, *jaga*—universe; *carācara*—living and non-living; परमकारम्, *paramakāram*—supreme Cause (of creation); सथ्, *sath*—truth; असथ, *asatha*—falsehood; अछिन्नदारम्, *achinnadāram*—to be present;



*This is the place—on the
Pari-mahal mountains—near
Chashma-shahi where Devi
Roopbhavani first performed her
spiritual disciplines*

*The cottage at Manigam in
which Devi continued her
spiritual practices*



सूख्मो, *sūkhmo*—subtle; परं ब्रह्म सोऽहम्—I am one with the supreme Brahman.

The Atman is neither fixed nor movable; nor is it limited to the four castes.

The Atman is not limited to the world, nor to the living and the non-living creation; the Atman is the supreme Cause (of all creation).

The Atman is beyond conventional truth and falsehood; yet it is equally present in both.

The Atman is realized in the subtle state of Samadhi. I who am the Atman have become one with the supreme Brahman.

योगु न योगान्तर संन्यास वर्णम्
तुरीया अतीता तथ् प्रसिदोऽहम्
अचिन्त्य रूपं तथा परम कारम्
थ्यर् केवलोऽहम् परं ब्रह्म सोऽहम् ॥४

*Yogu na yogāntara sannyāsa varṇam
turiyā atitā tath prasido'ham
acintya rūpam tathā parama kāram
thyar kevalo'ham param brahma so'ham. (4)*

योगु, *yogu*—yoga; योगान्तर, *yogāntara*—a new era, another age; संन्यास, *sannyāsa*—sannyasa, monasticism; वर्णम्, *varṇam*—class; तुरीया, *turiyā*—Turiya (fourth state); अतीता, *atitā*—past; प्रसिद, *prasida*—renowned, illustrious; अहम्, *aham*—I (am that Atman); अचिन्त्य, *acintya*—incomprehensible, inconceivable; रूपं, *rūpam*—form; परम, *parama*—supreme; कारम्, *kāram*—Cause; केवलोऽहम्, *kevalo'ham*—alone; थ्यर्, *thyar*—firm, steady, constant.

The Atman is not in yoga; nor in a *yogāntara*, a new age; it is not in (the formal external) *sannyasa* (monasticism).

The Atman is known in the state of Turiya (fourth state), past the three states (waking, dreaming, and deep sleep); it is of great renown. I am that Atman.

The Atman is of a form which is incomprehensible (unimaginable); and also it is the supreme Cause (of all creation).

The Atman is constantly alone. I who am the Atman have become one with the supreme Brahman.

माता न पिता ब्राता न बन्दु
वार्ता स वेदम् एको केवलोऽहम्
गोरू न चेला मंत्रो न लीला
सु युस् अकेला परं ब्रह्म सोऽहम् ॥५

*Mātā na pitā brātā na bandhu
vārtā na vedam eko kevalo'ham
gorū na celā manthro na līlā
su yus akelā param brahma so'ham. (5)*

माता, *mātā*—mother; पिता, *pitā*—father; ब्राता, *brātā*—brother; बन्दु, *bandu*—relatives; वार्ता, *vārtā*—explanation, commentary; वेदम्, *vedam*—Vedas; एक, *eka*—one; केवल, *kevala*—alone; गोरू, *goru*—guru; चेला, *celā*—disciple; मंत्रो, *manthro*—mantra (mystic syllables); लीला, *līlā*—divine play, sport; युस्, *yus*—this; सु, *su*—good, excellent; अकेला, *akelā*—alone; परं ब्रह्म सोऽहम्, *param brahma so'ham*—I am one with the supreme Brahman.

The Atman has no mother, no father, no brother, and no relatives. The Vedas have spoken of the nature of this Atman, which is one and always alone. I am that Atman.

The Atman has no guru; and no disciples; no mantra (mystic syllables) and no *līlā* (play).

This excellent Ātman is alone. I who am the Atman have become one with the supreme Brahman.

(to be continued)

The whole ocean is present at the back of each wave... When the waves are stilled, then all is one; ... 'a spectator without a spectacle', says Patanjali.

—Swami Vivekananda, 21 July 1895

The Dance of Shiva^{*}

P. SHNEIDRE

(Based on a poem by Swami Vivekananda)

God is dancing!
It's Shiva, Lord of yoga,
holder of the trident, a dancer
whose dance can destroy everything
—and why not, it's all his invention!

Flames fill the air;
is the sky on fire?
No. Shiva's hair is streaming upwards
as he moves in the din
of the interlocking rhythm
of seven worlds
shuddering under his feet,
shuddering to a stop, almost,
but he keeps on dancing
so our world keeps going
like a great god,
Shiva,
dancing.

* See our note on another poem by the author in the March '96 issue of PB.

Nature and Destiny of Man: Sri Aurobindo

DR. A. USHA RANI

Sri Sankara in his treatise Vivekachudamani explains that he who, having somehow obtained this rare human birth, does not strive for liberation is a fool who kills his own soul. In this article Dr. Usha Rani, Department of Philosophy, Andhra University, explains how Sri Aurobindo, step by step, had been taking his disciples to liberation, the ultimate goal of humanity.

Sri Aurobindo was a yogin, a great philosopher and mystic of the twentieth century. In the realm of Indian philosophy, Sri Aurobindo may be considered one with a mighty imagination and vision. He was a great poet and a supreme lover of mankind. His philosophy is an integral one and is fundamentally based on his concept of evolution which, in his view, is the progressive realization of the supreme or absolute Reality. It is mainly concerned with the higher destiny of man and the world. In this article we discuss the nature and destiny of man according to Sri Aurobindo.

Sri Aurobindo emphasized that man as evident to one's own perception by the senses is *not* the real man. He opined that man is 'composed of many parts, each of which contributes something to the total movement of our consciousness, our thought, feeling, action;...but we are aware only of their confused and pell-mell results on the surface.'¹ This inadequate knowledge is on account of the fact that there are in reality two aspects of a man's being—external and internal. The external nature of man is what is apparent to us. The external or surface consciousness is not always aware of the inner being—the subliminal self or the 'Caitya Purusha'—being veiled from it. The inner being too has its own inner physical,

inner vital and inner mental aspects. In this inner being of man is revealed the central being which Vedanta has described as the Atman.

Sri Aurobindo described 'man' as follows:

...the being of man is composed of these elements—the psychic being supporting all, the inner mental, vital and physical, and the outer—quite external nature of mind, life and body, which is their instrument of expression. But above all is the central being (Jivatma), which uses them all for its manifestation; it is a portion of the Divine Self.²

In fact, Aurobindo divided this central being into two aspects, the upper and the lower. The upper is the Jivatma, and the lower is the psychic being—the subliminal self or the 'Caitya Purusha'. The upper aspect existed even prior to human evolution while the lower represents man in the process of evolution.

It is, however, necessary to distinguish between 'Jivatma' and 'Caitya Purusha'. The Jivatma is conceived as a spark of the Divine, as a human version of Paramatma, and as such it transcends the individual expression of life and mind in individual

1. Sri Aurobindo, *Lights on Yoga* (Calcutta: Arya Publishing House, 1948), p. 15.

2. *Ibid.* p. 23.

men. The psychic being, on the other hand, is almost a deputy of Jivatma, expressing itself in and through individual life and existence and supporting it. That is why Aurobindo says that the psychic being is inside the evolutionary process, whereas the Jivatma is beyond evolution. Thus, we find that there are three aspects of man according to Aurobindo the outer soul, the inner soul or the Caitya Purusha and the Divine Soul or Jivatma.

Sri Aurobindo's exposition of man is, however, complicated and dependent upon the evolutionary process. But contemporary thinkers such as Swami Vivekananda and Gandhiji expressed their ideas in a simple and easy-to-understand language. Nevertheless all these three thinkers were more or less influenced by the Advaita Vedanta.

According to Swami Vivekananda, man is perfect, pure, free and divine. Infinite power and energy lie within each soul, and all his actions are the outcome of that divinity trying to express itself. He thus claimed that man is basically divine, and further identified each soul with God. There is no expression of God higher than man: 'Man is God and God is Man'; He is our inner being. Throughout his life he endeavoured to make each man manifest the divinity latent within himself.

Man, according to Gandhiji, is evolved from the brute—from the physical to the spiritual. He has the power to reason, the faculty of discrimination, and manifests free-will. With his reason he worships God to know Him and to find Him. With his discriminative faculty he can rise higher and higher on the moral plane and develop noble virtues such as love, peace and harmony. Gandhiji considered man not only to be a physico-chemical material entity but also to be a spiritual being. Being a follower of Advaita Vedanta, Gandhiji believed that

man and God are not separate. The soul of man is nothing but Brahman, and man is a part of the one ultimate Reality. He is the 'spark of the Divine fire, a part of God'.

Destiny of Man

Even as man is developing scientifically and progressing materially, he has been deteriorating gradually in the measure of his spiritual awareness. With his intellectual acumen, he can form only a subjective concept of the world, of himself and of God. This intellectual attainment cannot however be the final goal of human life. Hence man must aim to develop himself into a perfect spiritual being, into a 'being of the supreme and Universal Existence, Consciousness, Delight and Sacchidananda.'³

According to Aurobindo, man is ignorant about the truth of this spirit. First let us examine what spirituality and spiritual transformation are in the light of Aurobindo. For him, 'spirituality is not high intellectuality, not idealism, not an ethical turn of mind or moral purity and austerity, not religiosity or an ardent and exalted emotional fervour, not even a compound of all these excellent things.'⁴ All these valuable developments through mental evolution are, however, accepted as a preparatory stage for man's spiritual evolution. He added that even the realization of the spirit in man is not the final destiny of human beings. For him, the aim of evolution is to achieve an integral transformation of the whole personality of man. This cannot be done simply by the realization of the spirit. According to Aurobindo gnostic transformation is totally different from what we generally understand by moral uplift. It is supraethical in the sense that morality is

3. Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1955), vol. II, part II, p. 817.

4. *Ibid.* p. 1021.

only a phase of evolution.

Thus, deviating from other contemporary Indian thinkers, Aurobindo developed a different ideology and conceived of a triple transformation, namely, the psychic, the spiritual and the supra-mental, which is necessary for ascending to the higher realm. The first vital transformation is called the psychic transformation, in which the soul controls the physical body, life and mind. The second transformation of the soul personality into a spiritual personality bestows on an individual greater power, blessedness, truth and spiritual consciousness. The higher mind, illumined mind, intuitive mind and overmind manifest hierarchical grades of consciousness in man. When this spiritual consciousness emerges in man, spiritual transformation of body, life and mind, and identity with Sacchidananda is established. At this stage, with the emergence of the divine consciousness in man, ignorance is effaced. He becomes a Gnostic being (Superman) and life in this stage becomes a 'Divine life'.

This attainment of the supramental status is not the ultimate destiny of man. These supermen are also required to work for the transformation of others and, therefore, the ultimate goal of evolution lies still ahead. Thus we find that the transformation of man into superman, although essential, is not the only aspect of evolution; evolution should not come to a stop with the emergence of one or a few supermen. It has to bring on earth a 'Divine life', 'a perfected life on earth', which primarily means a life in which there will be a race of supramental gnostic individuals (a race of supermen).

Divine life, then, is the ultimate destiny, the goal of evolution. But how to bring it on earth? Sri Aurobindo's answer is that this can be done by Yoga. He says that Yoga is the only means to reach this divine destiny

of man. In his opinion the various yogas such as the Hatha-yoga, the Tantrika-yoga, the yoga of Mahayana Buddhism, of the *Gita*, of Patanjali and others are one-sided. Hence, he synthesized the powers and processes of all the yogas and formed the concept of 'Poorna Yoga'. Sri Aurobindo's Poorna Yoga is concerned with the complete transformation of human personality in each and every aspect. Such a transformation refines man's personality and enables him to attain to a divine status.

So far we have discussed the means which, according to Sri Aurobindo, one should employ to reach the destiny of man. In the present day society, man is competing with brother man in a tiring race to reach an undetermined goal. In such a situation he would not care for his spiritual evolution. He would rather question the existence of God and deny spirituality. Can the Poorna Yoga of Sri Aurobindo be taught to such a man? Of course, Poorna Yoga has its own philosophic value, and it may be the best method for at least some men to reach their destiny. But for the common man of today it is rather difficult to practise. Consequently, like other contemporary Indian thinkers I too feel that it is rather easier to make man pay attention to and discharge their social commitments and strive for an improved moral status—as a first step to attaining eligibility for the ultimate goal. □

Worship of God, worship of the holy ones, concentration and meditation, and unselfish work, these are the way of breaking away from maya's net; but we must first have the strong desire to get free.

—Swami Vivekananda, 3 August 1895.

Where Gods Reside

SHANTI DIGHE

The Himalayas inspire love and adoration of the Supreme. Like many others, the author has evidently felt that too. She writes here heart-warmingly about three holy places in the mountains associated with the sacred memory of Swami Vivekananda and his disciples. Shanti Dighe is of Baroda, Gujarat.

Mayavati

*Astyuttarasyām diśi devatātmā himālayo
nāma nagādhirājah...*

This is how Kalidasa begins his *Kumārasambhavam* and extols the lofty Himalayas in succeeding verses. Apart from the glory of scenic beauty, the snowclad Himalayas from very ancient times have represented to all Indians the highest spiritual sublimity. The Himalayas are described by the ancient poets not only as a region of exotic and rare flora and fauna but as the dwelling place of celestial beings like *kin-naras* and *gandharvas*—the heaven-like abode of gods and goddesses. Ancient *ṛṣis* and *yogis* practising their austerities in the valleys and caves of the Himalayas, created an atmosphere of spirituality; so much so, that in all the later scriptures the northerly direction is considered most holy and fulfilling for spiritual aspirants. We read in the *Mahābhārata* that the Pāṇḍavas on their final journey, the *mahāprasthān*, wended their way to the Himalayas, and Śaṅkarācārya in his final sojourn went beyond the Kedarnath peaks and mingled into oblivion.

The great snowclad mountains have always beckoned awakened souls and Swami Vivekananda's wanderings took him to these mountains where he felt charged with an exaltation of sublimity he experienced nowhere else. His deep study of the Vedanta and Advaita philosophy and his growing concern at the miseries of the

sunken millions ultimately inspired him to undertake his journey to the West to proclaim the great and ancient heritage of India to all the world and to correlate the Vedantic precepts to practical life. He wanted to uplift the masses of India.

It was in the year 1896 that Swami Vivekananda visited England for the second time and from there he went on a tour of the continent, climbing in the Alps with his disciples Captain and Mrs. Sevier and Miss Muller. It was in these great mountains of Europe that those who were to be the founders of the Advaita Ashrama and dedicate their lives to it, heard for the first time of Swamiji's longing to establish a monastery in the heart of his beloved Himalayas. He said: 'Oh, I long for such a monastery to which I can retire from the labours of my life and pass the rest of my days in meditation! It will be a centre for work and meditation where my Indian and Western disciples can live together and then I shall train as workers, the former to go out as preachers of Vedanta to the West and the latter to devote their lives to the good of India.'

Inspired by his vision, Captain Sevier and Mrs. Sevier, who had accompanied Swami Vivekananda from England to India in 1897, undertook a lookout tour for a suitable place in the interior Himalayan district of Almora. They were accompanied by Swami Swarupananda, another of Swamiji's disciples. After an extensive and diligent

search they came upon the beautiful estate of Mayavati with its thickly wooded hills at an elevation of 6,500 feet, fifty miles from Almora town, commanding a magnificent view of the snowrange. It was indeed a miraculous discovery and one wonders at the tenacity of purpose of these two people, foreigners in the region, considering the difficult terrain and the sometimes treacherous mountain trails pursued on ponyback—an altogether risk-filled and adventurous undertaking in those days for newcomers.

The Seviars decided at once that Mayavati would be an ideal spot for Swamiji's cherished Advaita Ashrama and it could also serve as a permanent home for the *Prabuddha Bharata* which they had helped to revive in Almora.

The estate being up for sale, the purchase was made promptly. Swami Swarupananda and the Seviars shifted to Mayavati from Almora on 19th March 1899, which was the auspicious birth anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna. Thus the Advaita Ashrama was founded with the heartfelt blessings of Swami Vivekananda. The Swami and the Seviars brought the P.B. Press with them from Almora.

This Advaita Ashrama was one of the most unique of the institutions started under the inspiration of Swami Vivekananda. The following lines he wrote to the joint-founders of the Ashrama set forth some of its ideals and principles:

...Wherever there has been expansion in love or progress in well-being, of individuals or numbers, it has been through the perception, realization, and the practicalization of the Eternal Truth—the *Oneness of All Beings*....Hitherto it has not been possible to preach this Noble Truth entirely free from the settings of dualistic weakness; this alone, we are convinced,

explains why it has not been more operative and useful to mankind at large.

To give this *One Truth* a freer and fuller scope in elevating the lives of individuals and leavening the mass of mankind, we start this Advaita Ashrama on the Himalayan heights, the land of its first expiration.

Here it is hoped to keep Advaita free from all superstitions and weakening contaminations. Here will be taught and practised nothing but the Doctrine of Unity, pure and simple; and though in entire sympathy with all other systems, this Ashrama is dedicated to Advaita and Advaita alone.¹

Mayavati Advaita Ashrama is situated in the eastern Kumaon region of the Himalayan foothills, resting against a slope on a range to the north of the valley of Champavat. It was originally a tea-planter's property—with lovely wood-and-stone bungalow, and a tea-factory which now houses the library and the living quarters of the monks.

Set in a lovely garden, placed against a backdrop of steep-sloping dark green mountains, the Ashrama on its northern side commands a breathtaking view of a wide range of snowclad peaks: Nanda Devi, Trisul, Nandakot, Panchachulli, Kamet and others. Bedecked with lovely flowers and creepers, the garden resplendent with blossoms of roses, dahlias, chrysanthemums, lilies, and banks of red and purple flowering shrubs the Ashrama is in a lovely setting. A pleasing green stretch of lawn lies on the northern side with a grand old oak tree standing guard overlooking a valley thickly forested with oaks and rhododendron, spruces and pines. Far below, a small rivulet

1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1989), vol. 5, p.435.

runs which becomes torrential in the rainy season. Songs of unfamiliar birds mingled with the rustling of leaves and whispering of the wind through the pines greets a wandering visitor as he walks up the long winding approach road.

Under the supervision of Swami Swarupananda and the Seviers, Mayavati Ashrama started functioning and Swami Vivekananda came to sanctify it after almost two years of its existence. He came in January 1901. Before this however, Captain Sevier unfortunately had succumbed to the rigours and austerities of those early days when medical facilities were scarcely available. His body was cremated near the rivulet below.

The winter of 1900-01 was unusually severe, particularly at the time of Swamiji's visit. The journey he made from Kathgodam to Mayavati, a distance of sixty-five miles, was by no means an easy one. There was heavy snowfall on the way, and rain, but the Swami kept the whole party in high spirits. On the fourth day, on the mountain opposite Mayavati, the party caught their first sight of the Ashrama. Then as they arrived at the stream in the gorge below, Swamiji heard the bell of the monastery striking twelve. He was so anxious to reach the Ashrama that he mounted a horse and pressed on at a fast pace. When he arrived he expressed his joy at seeing all the inmates and gave his condolences to Mrs. Sevier.

Due to the inclemency of the weather Swamiji had to spend much of the time indoors. All the while he was engaged in fruitful talks with the inmates and devotees, inspiring them with the high ideals the Advaita Ashrama stood for. He told Swami Swarupananda of the work that he desired to be carried out here and he charged him to push on with it with great zeal and energy. One point that he stressed upon was that a

work programme should be chalked out to be pursued along with the routine of concentration and meditation. But to one who wanted exclusive meditation he counselled that the Mayavati-life could not consist of exclusive meditation! 'How can you think of meditating for hours?' he said. 'Only certain hours in the morning and evening are needed. The rest of the time you will have to engage yourself in study or some work for the general good!'²

No formal ritual-worship of Sri Ramakrishna is done in this Ashrama in deference to the wish of Swami Vivekananda who wanted this particular Advaita Ashrama to be without ceremonial worship.

Here, [he said] attention is to be paid only to the subjective element of religion such as private meditation, individual and collective study of scriptures and the teaching and practice of the highest spiritual monism free from any dualistic weakness or dependence.³

The work of publishing *Prabuddha Bharata* every month continued in earnest at Mayavati as it had in Almora for the previous several months. Swami Swarupananda was the Editor-in-charge, Captain Sevier was Patron and Manager, and Mrs. Sevier would correct proofs. Swamiji himself wrote three articles for the Journal during his stay here,⁴ and in a couple of years Swami Swarupananda would start collecting the materials for the first edition of *The Complete Works of Swamiji*, the Work ap-

2. *The Life of Swami Vivekananda, by His Eastern and Western Disciples* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1981), vol. 2, p. 568.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 571.

4. The three articles Swamiji wrote were: 'Aryans and Tamilians', 'Stray Remarks on Theosophy', and 'The Social Conference Address'.

pearing in print (1907–10) after Swarupananda's passing away in 1906.

With due deference to Swamiji's desire that the monks should take up some work in the Ashrama for social service, a small charitable dispensary was started in 1903 to serve the needs of local people in the neighbouring and far off villages. Through the years this valuable work has grown and expanded. Today resting on the northern slope a little below the Ashrama stands the Mayavati Charitable Hospital, known far and wide, with a qualified resident doctor. The Hospital is equipped with up-to-date facilities and a high standard of cleanliness and efficiency is maintained. Besides the outpatient treatment there is also an indoor department having twenty-five permanent beds. Medical attention is rendered to suffering people on a completely charitable basis irrespective of caste and creed. Donations from the general public are its support. The Hospital is furnished with a dental clinic and a small operation theatre, although no major surgery is performed and dental work is at present limited to emergency cases. There is a small but well-appointed pathological laboratory.

A furlong distant, on the way leading to the Ashrama from the nearby town a new guesthouse has been built for visiting devotees. It is near the original cottage of Captain and Mrs. Sevier. Nowadays this latter bungalow also is used to accommodate guests during the rush period. Thus the monks are not disturbed in the Ashrama and the devotees can enjoy the blissful surroundings of Mayavati and spend a few days in meditation and self-introspection.

Today the Ashrama has several modern amenities. Electricity lights the buildings and some of the paths, and the stretch of road from Lohaghat to Mayavati is maintained by the municipality. Jeeps and other

vehicles are available on hire for plying the distance. Still Mayavati retains much of its old charm. The forests of oak and other indigenous species are still surviving and many deodars and pines planted by Swami Swarupananda and the early inmates are in a few places dense and deep. With mist and sunshine creating a lovely play of shadow and light, Mayavati looks like a divine dream to those who have imbibed deeply of Sri Ramakrishna's and Swami Vivekananda's teachings. It is a land of beauty and sublimity!

Almora

The place most often frequented by Swami Vivekananda during his Himalayan sojourn was Almora, a small hill town in the northern part of Uttar Pradesh situated at a height of about 5,000 feet.

It was in the year 1890 that Swami Vivekananda, accompanied by Swami Akhandananda, first visited Almora. Equipped with only staff and *kamandalu*⁵ they walked from the railway station at Kathgodam to Nainital and thence in the direction of Almora. On the third day they arrived at a place called Kakrighat on the river Kosi, which immediately attracted Swami Vivekananda as being a good halting place and 'a delightful spot for meditation'. Here sitting under a great peepul tree Swamiji entered into deep meditation and for a long time he was lost to all outward consciousness. When he returned to the normal state of consciousness he exclaimed to Akhandananda: 'O Gangadhar, I have just passed through one of the greatest moments of my life. I have found the oneness between the macrocosm and the microcosm!'⁶ Even to this day the grand old peepul tree stands and the small stone structure, once a water-

5. A water-pot carried by sannyasins made of dried shell of a gourd.

6. *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, vol. 1, p. 250.

mill, can be seen nearby on the riverside where they passed the night.

The next stretch was a steep climb as they approached Almora. Not having eaten anything, Swami Vivekananda at one place sank down on a stone slab to rest. He felt exhausted almost to the point of fainting. Swami Akhandananda went in search of water for him and in the meantime a pious Muslim fakir came along from a nearby graveyard and offered a cucumber for Swamiji to eat. This unexpected kindness of the man revived and refreshed him. The stone slab on which Swamiji rested and the almost gone-to-ruin graveyard can still be seen. In recent years a small structure has been built nearby by devotees, friends and well-wishers which is called the 'Swami Vivekananda Rest Hall'. The new motor road now approaching Almora passes just above the site—a place intended not just for rest but which provides visitors with a quiet nook to sit and reminisce.

When Swami Vivekananda and Swami Akhandananda reached Almora they met two other brother-monks at the house of Badri Shah, a local businessman, where they stayed for a few days. Swamiji however was constantly longing to go into solitary retirement for meditation. He discovered a cave under an overhanging cliff adjacent to the temple of Kasar Devi, a forested spur five miles to the northeast of Almora. In this cave Swamiji entered into a deep meditation 'determined to reach the ultimate realization which he held to be the goal of life'. But some strange power dragged him down to the world of mundane reality—a sort of pressing feeling that he had 'a mission to fulfil'. Akhandananda says, 'Every time Swamiji desired to retire into a life of silence

and pure monasticism, he was compelled to give it up by the pressure of circumstances.'⁷ He returned to Almora and found a telegram waiting with the sad news of the suicide of his widowed sister. It was a great blow to him and the determination came to him to confront some of the orthodox traditions which harassed the women and crippled the society.

Next comes a period when Swamiji wandered in the plains of India, coming in close contact with the masses and their problems, which ultimately led to his journey to the West to participate in the Parliament of Religions at Chicago. This turned him into a world figure; and then followed a period when he toured America and England. It was in the year 1897 that Swamiji returned to India accompanied by some of his western disciples, namely, J.J. Goodwin, Margaret Noble and Captain and Mrs. Sevier, among others. After setting up the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission in Calcutta, Swamiji left Calcutta for Almora, at doctors' instance, in May 1897. His health was almost broken due to the tremendous strain of his long years of work in the West and now after his homecoming to India.

Almora received Swamiji in a mood of welcoming a hero, with a triumphant procession from the outskirts of the city. Riding a brightly caparisoned horse, he was led to the main bazar of the town where three thousand people stood waiting to hear him speak. It was a wonderful moment. This time Swamiji stayed in Almora for two and a half months as a guest in the house of Badri Shah. The house still stands in the bazar and the room Swamiji used is kept apart. The Seviers later rented a house in Almora, now known as Thompson House.

7. Gertrude Emerson Sen, *Swami Vivekananda's Three Visits to Almora* (Almora: Sri Ramakrishna Kutir, 1985), p. 6.

In 1898 Swami Vivekananda again visited Almora, this time accompanied by some

of his western disciples including Sister Nivedita, and two of his brother-monks, Swami Niranjanananda and Swami Turiyananda. This was almost like a training period for his western disciples; he also met many distinguished personages like Annie Besant and Aswini Kumar Dutta and made clear his own idea of how India's salvation was to be attained. However, Swamiji sometimes escaped the company and retired to far off places like Shiya Devi, a forested peak which can be seen to the west of Almora. It is said that he went by crossing the valley and the river Kosi in the gorge below, and climbed the steep slope of the mountain to meditate in the pristine atmosphere of the temple at the top. Today the visitor would think it a strenuous all-day trek to go and return. It was a few months after this sojourn of Swamiji that, inspired by his vision of an Advaita centre in the Himalayas, the Seviars discovered the fortuitous and secluded spot at Mayavati fifty miles to the east.

Almora however retains its own importance among the memories of Swamiji's frequent visits to the Himalayas and there is evidence of his divine presence, places sanctified by his intense austerity and meditation. It was in the year 1916 that Swami Shivananda and Swami Turiyananda founded the Ramakrishna Kutir on the steep western end of the ridge running down from above the town. The Ashrama still maintains its distance from the growing community. Now its several buildings perch on different levels of the hillside. The shrine is housed in the original cottage part way down the slope, where worship and daily *pūjā* is offered to Sri Ramakrishna, Ma Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda. Every evening prayers are sung. There are other buildings—the monks' quarters, the library, and the guest-houses—the stone steps and pathways flanked with blooming shrubs and wild roses lending charm to the whole scene. The guest cottages just below

the tar road approaching the town provide a quiet retreat for the devotees. Shiva Devi is a lovely view across the valley and the snowcapped peak of Nanda Devi can be seen to the north if one goes out for a short walk.

Shyamala Tal

The third sanctuary in the Himalayas commemorating Swamiji is at Shyamala Tal, called The Vivekananda Ashram. A few miles away (about 29) from Mayavati, it is situated in the southern ranges of the Kumaon at a height of 4,955 feet above sea-level. The Ashrama is built on a shoulder of the mountain with a sparkling blue lake below it. The old name of the village, Shyanla, was changed to Shyamala Tal—The Blue Lake—by Swami Virajananda because of its blue water. As one ascends an adjacent ridge (Shyamala Tal-point) one can see on one side two smaller lakes and on the other side a wide stretch of the valley of the Mahakali River (also known in its lower reaches as the Sharda) which forms a boundary of Nepal. A steep climb from the lake brings one to the Ashrama and a picturesque sight—a creeper-clad arch through which the path banked with dahlias and lilies leads to the Ashrama premises.

This Ashrama was established by Swami Virajananda who was an initiated disciple of the Holy Mother and who received *sannyasa* from Swami Vivekananda, one of his first four monastic disciples. Revered Virajananda wrote in his diary on 31 December 1914 that the building of this Ashrama marked for him 'the beginning of a new life of peaceful and ardent meditation and seeking for the highest'.⁸

8. Swami Shraddhananda, *The Story of An Epoch, Swami Virajananda and His Times* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, 1982), p. 136.

Years before, after the passing away of Swami Swarupananda, Swami Virajananda was sent to Mayavati as the second President of the Advaita Ashrama. It had been an arduous step for the Swami, what with that Ashrama's financial problems, duties of managing the publication of *Prabuddha Bharata*, and the monumental task of continuing the work started by Swarupanandaji of compiling the *Complete Works* of Swami Vivekananda. As the fifth volume of this work was nearing completion, the idea of bringing out a biography of Swamiji struck Virajananda. With the help and assistance of Mother Sevier he quickly set about collecting data for this new project. Though Swami Virajananda was a tireless worker, the long-continuing strain started telling on his health. He felt now the need for rest and seclusion and also wanted to satisfy his deep longing for a contemplative life. With Mother Sevier's encouragement he decided to start a new ashrama nearby. Mrs. Sevier understood his mood and helped him in selecting this most desirable site. She personally paid a visit to the place and declared 'This is the spot', (after having disapproved of an earlier proposition) 'I feel as if I had come to this very place before. Everything, as it were, seems familiar to me.'⁹

Purchase of the land was made on 8 November 1914. The mouldering stone cottage that existed on the plot needed total renovation and new quarters for a kitchen etc. required to be constructed. All this work reached completion by late spring 1915, and an auspicious day was chosen for the consecration of the building in the name of Swami Vivekananda. Mother Sevier attended the ceremony and Swami Brahmananda wrote for the occasion: 'I am happy that the new Ashrama has been dedicated and named after our Swamiji.'

Swami Prajnananda took over as President of Mayavati and Swami Virajananda could devote all his attention to the management of the new Ashrama. He also brought to completion here the work of publishing the first edition of Swamiji's biography in four volumes. The absolute self-mastery, unwavering steadfastness and undaunted self-reliance that he displayed during this formative period of the Shyamala Tal Ashrama is indeed amazing! Many a time he had to run the Ashrama almost single-handedly—he did the household work, cooked, looked after the garden, carried on with his *japa* and meditation, intense *sādhana* and studies; and if any monk or devotee passed that way he played the perfect host. Shyamala Tal soon became a halting spot for all who were on their way to Mayavati—the quiet Ashrama seemed a haven of profound peace and Swami Virajananda's hospitality overwhelmed the visitors.

From the beginning, hill-folk from the surrounding villages sought healing from Swami Virajananda and he used to dispense indigenous herbal medicines. This area is still rich in plants and shrubs of medicinal value. From these modest beginnings the present dispensary and hospital came into being, now known as Sri Ramakrishna Sevashram. At present a well-qualified resident doctor tends to the health care and ailments of these people.

Mother Sevier during her stay used to visit the tiny hamlet on the lake below and mix with the simple village folk. The mountain on whose gentle slope the Ashrama stands rises about 400 feet higher than the buildings. On some days Swami Virajananda and Mother Sevier would climb to this lofty vantage point (Banphool-point) to enjoy the serene beauty of the mountains and the vast forests below. Twelve miles from Shyamala Tal one can see Punyagiri—the sacred hill—a shrine most difficult

9. *Ibid.*, p. 134.

of access in those days. On this hill, formerly, there was neither temple nor image—the mountain peak itself was worshipped as the abode of the Divine Mother!

In 1924 Swami Virajananda acquired another property just around the hill, situated a short distance away from the Ashrama and he found this house an ideal place for spiritual practice. In 1940 an upper storey was added to the bungalow and from that time Swami Virajananda lived there whenever he visited Shyamala Tal. His personal belongings are still looked after lovingly and his room is a reminder of his living presence in those far-off days. The Swami remained in this quiet sanctuary for quite a few years though he always obeyed the orders from Belur Math and undertook duties and responsibilities that devolved upon him.

In 1926 a convention of all branches of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission was held in Belur Math and Swami Virajananda was appointed the Secretary of the Working Committee. Besides, in 1929 he was appointed to take charge of the Udbodhan House at Baghbazar and he also supervised the school started by Sister Nivedita. Once he was chosen to go to America to assist Swami Abhedanandaji, but to his relief he was absolved of this responsibility. He also supervised and organized the centenary celebrations of the birth of Sri Ramakrishna in 1936 at Belur Math. Ultimately in 1938 Swami Virajananda was chosen as the sixth President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, after the passing away of Swami Shuddhananda. Even then he continued to

visit Shyamala Tal in the summer months. Once at Shyamala Tal he would behave like an inmate of the Ashrama, shedding aside, as it were, his mantle of Presidentship of the Order.

Shyamala Tal, the *sāadhanapīṭha*¹⁰ of Swami Virajananda, is truly a retreat for spiritual aspirants—both monks and devotees. Besides the main Ashrama building standing in the front side, as one proceeds around the hilltop along the pathway flanked with wild roses and other plants, one comes upon the 'kutir' or cottage of Swami Virajanandaji Maharaj, and further on stand the guest cottages. From this northern side of the hill, from various vantage points, one can have a grand view of the valley below with its small farmhouses and cultivated plots sending forth the melodious tinkling of cattle bells; and across the valley tiers and tiers of mountain ranges like a ripple of blue waves meet the eyes, beyond which peep the snowcapped peaks of Nanda Devi and Trisul which turn golden as the sun sets.

Electricity has not yet reached Shyamala Tal. As the evening shadows stretch the Ashrama looks mysterious in the dimming light. Soon lanterns are lighted and voices are hushed into whispers. The lamp-lit Ashrama shrine beckons the world-weary devotee to experience the infinite peace and bliss of the Master's and Swamiji's presence. □

10. Place of the monk's spiritual practice and self-discipline considered holy.

God's devotees have nothing to fear. They are His own. He always stands by them.

— *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 504–5

Review Article

*JESUS CHRIST: AN ARTIFICE FOR AGGRESSION: By Sita Ram Goel;
publ. Voice of India, New Delhi; pp. vi+114.*

Faith and facts are often at loggerheads. The one is a matter of belief, the other a matter of proof. The one can turn into conviction irrespective of its vulnerability on historical count; the other may well flounder on iconoclasm. The one is likely to betray a pachydermatous indifference to reality; the other may lead to japery in matters requiring evidence. The faithful say with Tennyson: 'Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt and cling to Faith beyond the forms of faith.' The retort comes in Edgar Watson Howe's words: 'If your faith is opposed to experience, to human learning and investigation, it is not worth the breath used in giving it.'

Blasphemous though it may appear to be, Christological researches undertaken by western scholars and theologians have widened the gulf between 'the Jesus of History and the Christ of faith'. Missionaries who once argued that Jesus—unlike Rama, Krishna, or Buddha—was not a mythical character and that his thaumaturgic faculties and miracles were noticed and vouchsafed by his contemporaries, are now at the receiving end. This book tabulates the research in the field and deplores the fact that the Church continues to be a tool of imperialism.

Herman Samuel Reimarus, Professor of Oriental Languages at the University of Hamburg, was the first to subject the Biblical dogmas to radical scrutiny. In *The Aims of Jesus and His Disciples* posthumously published in 1778 (by his friend Lessing, German critic and dramatist), Jesus was presented as 'a failed Jewish revolutionary whose dead body was stolen from his tomb by his disciples in order to spread the story of his resurrection'.

Surprisingly, the majority of the Jewish sources worth the name fail to take cognizance of the existence of Jesus. Philo (20 BC–AD 54) and Justus of Tiberias, for

example, do not even remotely allude to him. The two passages mentioning Jesus in Flavius Josephus's works have been proved to be interpolatory. There are only five authentic references to Jesus in the Rabbinical literature but they fail to confirm his historicity 'as none of them is sufficiently early'. Besides, 'they are so vague in their chronology that they differ by as much as 200 years in the dates they assign to him'. The Jesus of the Jewish tradition does not synchronize with his Christian form. M. Goldstein, author of *Jesus in the Jewish Tradition* (New York, 1950) concluded that the *Talmud* was far from useful as a source of information about Jesus.

Most of the Greek and Roman accounts, viz. those of Seneca (2 BC–AD 66), Pliny the Elder (AD 23–79), Martial (AD 40–102), Plutarch (AD 45–125), Juvenal (AD 55–140), Apuleius (ca. AD 170), and Dio Casius (AD 155–240) are virtually ignorant of the existence of Jesus. Epictetus (AD 50–100) refers to Judas who spearheaded the revolt against Rome in the first decade of the first century, but nowhere does he refer to the Jesus of Nazareth. Ian Wilson, author of *Jesus: The Evidence* (Pan Books, 1985) unequivocally remarked after going through stray passages referring to 'Chrestus' or his worshippers in Pliny the Younger (AD 60–114), Tacitus (AD 55–120), Suetonius (AD 70–120) and Sulpicius Severus (died AD 400) that 'there is scarcely a crumb of information to compel a belief in Jesus' existence.'

Basing his observations on George Ory's work, *An Analysis of Christian Origins* (London, 1961), Sita Ram Goel argues that the word *Chrestus* occurring in pagan sources did not mean in the ancient world the same as the words 'Christus' or 'Christos'. It meant 'good' or 'agreeable' and was 'claimed by characters belonging to several sects which practised initiation by anoint-

ment'. That alone explains why the interpolator scratched the 'e' in *Chrestus* and replaced it by an 'i' in the work of Tacitus.

The facts contained in the *Gospels* with regard to Jesus' year, date and place of birth, his immaculate conception, genealogy, parentage, ministry, trial by Jews and resurrection are, at times, not in consonance with one another. Matthew and Luke assign Jesus' birth to 'the days when Herod was the king of Judea' (i.e. before 3 BC). Luke, however, says that Jesus was 'about thirty years old' when John baptized him 'in the fifteenth year of Tiberius' (i.e. AD 29). John states that Jesus was less than fifty when he laid down his life, which implies that he must have taken birth around 22–15 BC. Eusebius fixes his death in AD 22 'which takes his birth to 9 BC, if he was thirty when he died; to 12 BC if he was thirty-three, and to 28 BC if he was nearing fifty.' It was Dionysius Exiguus, the sixth century Roman monk, who fixed AD 1 as Jesus' date of birth. It is worthwhile mentioning that Mark and John are silent on this point.

Diverse dates of birth of Jesus: viz. April 19, May 10, November 17, January 6, March 28, and March 25 were in vogue during the times of Clement of Alexandria (ca. 200). Although some western churches commemorated the birth of the Lord on December 25 (AD 354) it took more than a hundred years before this date could be ubiquitously accepted.

The question of whether Jesus was born in Bethlehem evokes different answers apropos the *Gospels*. While Matthew and Luke say 'Yes', John and Mark assume that his birthplace was Nazareth in the Galilee region. Will Durant observes in this context that 'the virgin birth is not mentioned by Paul or John, and Matthew and Luke trace Jesus back to David through Joseph by conflicting genealogies; apparently the belief in the virgin birth rose later than in the Davidic descent.'

Goel is sore over the fact that while new translations of the *Bible* do not adhere to the concept of 'virgin birth' of Jesus, the Catholic Church refuses to see reason. In Hebrew the word *almah* means 'young woman' and not 'virgin', for which the correct expression is

betulah. Matthew mentions Mary 'as having conjugal relations with Joseph.' Elsewhere in the *Gospels* Mary is mentioned as the mother of several children besides Jesus. The dogmatism of the Church in this respect led Anatole France to do a story in which a prostitute prostrates before a statue of virgin Mary in Paris and prays: 'Holy Mother! You conceived without sinning. Let me sin without conceiving.' The *Gospel* accounts of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection also differ from one another in many respects. Besides, there is plenty of evidence that the *Gospels* have been considerably edited over the years—a fact acknowledged in *The New English Bible: The New Testament* published jointly by Oxford and Cambridge Universities in 1961. The *Old Testament* prophecies have also been exposed to 'higher criticism' by many Western theologians like James P. Mackey, Michael Arnheim and G.A. Wells.

Albert Schweitzer, the celebrated author of *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (1906) ruefully noted that the praxis of the historicity of Jesus has crumbled. 'There is nothing more negative than the result of the critical study of the Life of Jesus. The Jesus of Nazareth who came forward publicly as the Messiah...and died to give His work its final consecration, never had any existence.' Rudolph Bultmann, acknowledged as the greatest *New Testament* theologian of the 20th century, arrived at almost the same conclusion.

Goel goes on to trace the existence of Jesus in Western literary texts from Reimarus to the present day. Almost all accounts mentioned in the book give a negative picture. To give a few examples: C. Binet-Sangle (1912) wrote that Jesus suffered from paranoia. D.H. Lawrence (1929) contended that Jesus was taken down too early from the cross, and he 'slipped away to Egypt to enjoy conjugal relations with a priestess of Isis.' R. Eisler (1931) presented him as the leader of 'armed bandits'. Wilhelm Lange Eichbaum (1946) found him to be egocentric. Morris Goldstein (1950) described him as a sorcerer; Carmichael (1963), as a guerrilla leader; W.E. Phipps (1970) as

(Continued on page 449)

The Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad

SWAMI SRIDHARANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

TWO TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE

तस्मै स होवाच द्वे विद्ये वेदितव्ये इति ह स्म
यद्ब्रह्मविदो वदन्ति, परा चैवापरा च।

*Tasmai sa hovāca: dve vidye veditavye iti
ha sma yadbrahmavido vadanti, parā caivāparā
ca. (I.i.4)*

*To him he (Aṅgiras) said: The knowers of
the import of the Vedas say: There are two
kinds of knowledge to be acquired—higher
and also the lower.*

To the question of Śaunaka, Aṅgiras replied that, tradition says that there are two parallel streams, two branches, of *vidyā*. He is not arrogating to himself the credit for this division of knowledge but attributes it to the *Brahmavits* (knowers of Brahman) of the past. He swears that this wisdom is not the outcome of his cogitation, but it is a traditional wisdom passed on from generation to generation for ages.

This shows the humility of the teacher, Aṅgiras, himself a *Brahmavit* and quite competent to explain these *vidyās* to Śaunaka without relying on mere tradition. But Aṅgiras considers it an honour and privilege to place traditional wisdom before his own knowledge. Thus the code of conduct of both the student and the teacher is specifically mentioned, and what is common to the two is the total effacement of pride. The student comes in a very humble, respectful

and receptive manner, and the teacher comes forward as a representative of the age-old wisdom, without arrogating any credit to himself.

Aṅgiras says that both the branches of learning—the higher and the lower—are worth knowing. He has assessed Śaunaka as a pupil who means business and will not be put off by an evasive answer about *parā* and *aparā-vidyās*. *Aparā* comprises the whole gamut of knowledge human society has discovered until now, continues to discover and will discover in the future—the sum total of human ideas, concepts, theories and principles in all the sciences, arts and humanities. These should never be neglected at the cost of others, but must be studied diligently, though *aparā* is secondary knowledge and *parā* is higher, sublime or primary knowledge. 'Higher' implies that there is nothing beyond or better than that highest wisdom. The other, 'lower' is not so sublime, and is of lesser consequence.

But why this distinction? This distinction is made because our thinking is now result-oriented: *Vidyā* is *vidyā*, every branch of learning is worth studying and knowing. However, *aparā* is not sublime because it pertains to the world around us, which is a changeful entity. So how can there be a final and fixed or changeless idea of that which is ever changing? Still, the welfare, quality of life, and progress of human beings are dependent on these *vidyās* which keep on changing with time and our experiences.

*Aparā-vidyā*s have their utility, but we should keep it in its proper place because as Śaṅkara says:¹ This world is an entwinement or mixture of *satya* (truth) and *anṛta* (untruth) as revealed in the spontaneous behaviour of people in their activities. The divine element is mixed up with the selfish element in our egos. So the wisdom collected from such a base cannot be the sublime, supreme, and final knowledge—by knowing which this mystery of our existence is known.

On the other hand, *parā-vidyā* is sublime because it is the knowledge of my true identity. Discrimination between *satya* and *anṛta* is like separating and collecting the sugar crystals from a mixture of sugar and sand. By means of it the transitory world is transcended and the immutable, eternal Self is reached. Swami Vivekananda said that the purpose of religion is to effect a qualitative growth in our personality till it is converted from the human into the divine. The *anṛta* is slowly isolated and discarded so that only *satya* remains. So by *parā-vidyā* one reaches the immutable Self—*So'ham, So'ham, I am He, I am He*—by a process of being and becoming.

तत्रापरा ऋग्वेदो यजुर्वेदः सामवेदोऽथर्ववेदः
शिक्षा कल्पो व्याकरणं निरुक्तं छन्दो ज्योतिषमिति।
अथ परा यया तदक्षरमधिगम्यते।

Tatrāparā ṛg-vedo yajur-vedaḥ sāmavedo' tharva-vedaḥ śikṣā kalpo vyākaraṇaṁ niruktaṁ chando jyotiṣamiti. Atha parā yayā tadakṣaramadhigamyate. (I.i.5)

Of these, 'lower' knowledge comprises the *Rg-veda*, *Yajur-veda*, *Sāma-veda*, and *Atharva-Veda* and the (six) sciences of pro-

nunciation (*śikṣā*), the code of rituals (*kalpa*), grammar (*vyākaraṇa*), etymology or definition (*nirukta*), metrics (*chanda*), astrology (*jyotiṣa*). The 'higher' knowledge is that by which the Imperishable or Immutable (*Akṣaram*), is realized.

This division of *parā-vidyā* and *aparā-vidyā* is introduced to delineate branches of knowledge based on the goal they lead to. Knowledge of natural sciences, social sciences and humanities is characterized as *aparā*, but it is not to be treated as a derogatory term or a denigration of that knowledge. Only it indicates that though these sciences give us increasing mastery over nature and society, they do not give us mastery over ourselves leading to the knowledge of the Truth underlying the universe.

Aparā consists of the four Vedas and the six Vedāṅgas (*śikṣā etc.*). Vedāṅga is the auxiliary knowledge, the study of which is necessary for understanding the norms and forms of studying the Vedas. The correct knowledge of the Vedāṅgas alone gives a correct perspective of the Vedic literature.

Śikṣā is the subject which deals with the method of pronouncing words correctly and precisely. *Kalpa* is the branch of knowledge that teaches the correct duties of life, whether it relates to the code of human conduct or to the performance of the Vedic rituals. There even exists a section of the Vedas that teaches how to propitiate the various elements of nature so that ecological balance is maintained. *Vyākaraṇa* teaches how to construct sentences correctly, because failure to express ideas correctly in grammatical form means that one is unable to convey one's ideas to another. If one says something incoherently, ungrammatically, in an imprecise manner, the hearer gets a confused or even a wrong idea. Grammar is, therefore, the instrument that precisely conveys ideas.

1. See his *Adhyāsa-bhāṣya* on the *Brahma-Sūtras*.

Nirukta is the fourth—the science of etymology, dealing with the roots of words and their grammatical usage. For example, *gam* is a root, and from it we coin the word *adhigamyate*, which means reaching; it denotes *gati* or motion. Other words too such as *gacchati*, *gamyate*, etc. are derived from the same root. Many words can be coined based on a single root, conveying precise and different shades of meaning. The fifth subject is *chanda*—or prosody, rhyme, rhythm—concerning arrangement of words to compose prose or poetry. Lastly comes *vyākṛāṇa* or astrology—to understand the science of the motion of stars. All these six subjects are necessary to understand the Vedas—from the basest ideas of sorcery and witchcraft to the highest philosophy of the Oneness of the universe.

The *parā-vidyā* is the Vedānta, or *Vedānta*, that is, supreme Knowledge, the pinnacle of the Vedas—the knowledge of the imperishable essence of the universe, which comprises the truth about myself as well as of the cosmos. Vedānta is learnt from the Upaniṣads, which contain the wisdom by coming close to which our ignorance about our real nature and about the universe is totally destroyed, and we become the knowers of the immutable essence of the universe.

Thus this *parā-vidyā* is the wisdom by means of which the *Akṣara*, the Immutable, the Imperishable, is attained. The *parā-vidyā* is cryptically and briefly defined in the *mantra*. *Akṣara* means the sublime Reality, which does not degenerate. Degeneration occurs in point of time—today, tomorrow or millions of years hence. But Reality, being changeless, does not decay over time. For the first time in this Upaniṣad the term *Akṣara* is used and it will be defined in the next *mantra*. It is the absolute, eternal, perennial existence transcending the destructive capacity of time.

The word *adhigamyate*, meaning *is reached*, gives an idea of physical movement in space. But *Brahmavidyā* does not involve going to any particular place. In physical movement, time and space both come into consideration. However, spiritual movement is not physical—from one place to another. It is a movement in time but not in space. A person becomes a better and a still better specimen of humanity. There is an inner evolution of personality, a qualitative improvement of personality.

So *adhigamyate* concerns the procedure of spiritual unfoldment, the being and becoming of the true original Self. By this process the small, petty human with all his frailties and limitations evolves into the illimitable Divine, Brahman. One does not go anywhere. He apparently conducts his life as before. All that has happened is that by development of introspection, he now has *antardṛṣṭi*, inward vision. It is a journey within one's own self, till the soul enlarges and encompasses the whole world. This process of internal evolution is time-consuming. It requires much *tapasyā*, austerity, of many lives. So we should stick on to this journey with will-power and perseverance, removing the dirt within us, which is preventing us from being divine.

Vidyā, which is common to both *parā* and *aparā*, refers to the learning process or acquisition of ideas through the intellect. In the *aparā* it stops with the fundamental sciences and is translated into theoretical and practical (applied) sciences. The wisdom acquired through *aparā* is converted into methods of improvement of human life.

In *parā-vidyā* also one makes use of the intellect to study. But the subject of study is the import of the Upaniṣads, the *Brahma-Sūtras* and the *Gītā*. No other knowledge teaches the methodology of changing the human personality into a divine personality.

After the intellect has passed from its absorption in applied sciences to qualitative improvement of personality, it acquires the capacity to analyse and critically examine human personality—to find out its limitations and remove these limitations so that ultimately the human personality enlarges into the Divine. In this process of being and becoming, however, the intellect is transcended. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that in order to become a spiritual aspirant one does not have to make oneself stupid or throw away one's intellect. No. The intellect must play its proper role in both the *vidyās*.

In *aparā-vidyā* the intellect goes to a certain extent—to know and master what is unknown in nature till now. In *parā-vidyā* the same intellect rationally convinces one that there is only one essence, Brahman, in both the universe and the *Atman* within. Thus our intellectual activity deals either with natural phenomena or with the quest for the spiritual essence. Intellectual pursuit turns either to apply the sciences to the improvement of our life style, or to analyse us—the biological entity—to find out where and why the expression of divinity is lacking, finally revealing that, because of selfishness and attachment to limited things our behaviour is not divine. An intellect trained well in both the *vidyās* gradually broadens ordinary self-

interest to include the family, the neighbour, then the society, the country and finally the entire humanity. The circumference of the self expands to encompass the whole universe.

The material sciences lead to control over the external world, while the spiritual sciences lead to control over our internal nature. The *parā-vidyā* enables us to unfetter our limitations, free ourselves from the bondage born out of ignorance of our original nature. While *aparā-vidyā*, knowledge of nature, is an endless pursuit, at the end of *parā-vidyā* nothing else remains to be known. But do not look down on the *aparā-vidyās*. A time comes when all the *aparā-vidyās* lead one to *parā-vidyā*. For example, *Sangita-śāstra*, *Nṛtya-śāstra* (the sciences of music and dance, respectively), etc. are *aparā-vidyās*, but they can be converted into *mokṣa-śāstras* (sciences of liberation). The Upaniṣads are *mokṣa-śāstras*, but so is *Vyākaraṇa* (grammar). Each *śāstra* can be so modulated that it too can lead to the same goal as the study of the Upaniṣads. The *śāstras* appear to be different, but in their divine essence they are one.

(to be continued)

Review Article

(Continued from page 445)

the husband of Mary Magdalene; Morton Smith (1974) as 'a hedonistic libertine', and so on.

The Christ of faith, however, lives, and shall continue to live. Goel's grudge is that Jesus of the *Gospels* is accepted not only by the westernized Hindu elite but also by Hindu saints and scholars, despite contrary evidence to his existence as a historical per-

sonality. He concludes that Jesus is 'no more than an artifice for legitimizing wanton imperialist aggression.'

The book having an aggressive tone is sure to raise controversy.

Dr. Satish K. Kapoor
Jalandhar City

Practical Vedanta

GOVERNOR OPENS DREAM HOSPITAL

Hanspukur (South 24-Parganas), W.B.: Suhashini Mistry did not sell vegetables today. It was a big day for her: the Governor, Mr. K.V. Raghunatha Reddy, came to her village to inaugurate the hospital that was built on her land.

Suhashini's husband, Sadhan, died in 1971 for lack of treatment as there was no hospital in the vicinity. She vowed to see to it that no one died uncared for in this area.

She started an outdoor clinic in her hut and formed the Humanity Society. A few years ago, villagers decided to build a hospital for which she donated her land.

Her dream came true today when Mr. Reddy and some state ministers went to Hanspukur, in the Thakurpukur police station area, to open the hospital.

'I am the happiest person in the world today. The hospital was not built by me alone but all the villagers did their bit. Hence we have decided to name it Humanity Hospital. I did not want to name it after my husband because I do not want publicity,' Suhashini said.

Ajay, who used to work as an errand boy in a restaurant, is now studying to be a doctor. 'All this is because of my mother—she sacrificed a lot to bring us up. I am looking forward to working in the hospital,' Ajay said.

The state health minister, Mr. Prasanta Sur, said: 'Suhashini Devi has shown us that power lies with the people. The hospital stands for her resilience.'

And although Suhashini did not go to the market today, tomorrow is another day. Her son is to go back to college and she will go to the market.



*Suhashini Mistry
surveys the hospi-
tal at Hanspukur*

THE *PB* CROSSES ANOTHER MILEPOST

The *PB* has now got a very good computer and a laser printer installed at Mayavati.

As movingly narrated in the journal's Centenary Special issue of Jan. '95, from 1899 to 1923 the *PB* was printed on its own handpress at Mayavati, despite great logistic difficulties in this remote place. Then, 'to improve the printing and the general get-up of the Journal'—as explained on the 'Notice' attached to the front cover of the last issue of 1923—, all the departments of the journal, except its editorial office, were shifted to Calcutta. The printing thereafter was done by letterpress—till September '93.

Then, in September '93, celebrations commenced world-wide to commemorate Swami Vivekananda's participation in the World Parliament of Religions, Chicago. As a part of the celebration, so to

say, we took another step forward. We installed a computer, with a laser printer unit, at Advaita Ashrama's Publication Department, Calcutta, to compose ourselves the *PB*'s text. Besides, the printing was shifted to an offset press. As a result, a further improvement in the *PB*'s overall quality was achieved.

One more step forward was taken in April this year. Thanks to the generous financial assistance from Prof. Shiv Kumar Gupta, U.S.A., a longtime friend of ours, now we have got a computer here, thus bringing back to *PB*'s home a major portion of its publication work from Calcutta. This will save a lot of time we formerly lost in postal communication with distant Calcutta. The final lithoprinting etc., however, will continue to be done at Calcutta. This month's *PB*-text, we are glad to say, was fully paginated at Mayavati. □

BRAINY CIRCUITS

Richard Potember of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, US, and Mieko Matsuzawa, a Japanese scientist have grown circuits made of brain cells on a silicon wafer, reports the *New Scientist*. According to the report, this development could lead to new ways of studying the action of drugs and alcohol on the brain, without working on animal models. It might also help computer scientists to build machines that use neurons (nerve cells) instead of transistors. The sci-

entists placed immature neurons on specially-coated glass slides and these cells, under the influence of nerve growth factors developed normally making connections with other neurons. They controlled the direction of growth and produced a very ordered circuit that mimics a semiconductor micro-electronics circuit. □

THE IMPACT OF NATURE ON OUR PSYCHE

Can humans be truly human and truly fulfilled in a world of glass and concrete set

apart from nature, surrounded by cultural artifacts and pursuits, enclosed in electronic cocoons where much of reality comes from television screens and the computer display.

Not in a million years, according to a new hypothesis. It holds that eons of evolution, during which humans constantly and intimately interacted with nature, have imbued Homo Sapiens with a deep genetically based emotional need to affiliate with the rest of the living world. Meeting this need, according to what is called the biophilia hypothesis, may be as important to human well-being as forming close personal relationships.

Scientists' efforts to test the hypothesis are still at an early stage. The term biophilia was coined in a 1984 book of the same name by Dr. Edward O. Wilson, an evolutionary biologist. Now, in *The Biophilia Hypothesis* a variety of scientists try to lay out the issue in more detail.

As the book shows there is some evidence in the proposition's favour and if it is true it has serious implications not only for urban dwellers but also for the natural world. For while biophilia is important to the human psyche, scientists who are investigating it say, the characteristic becomes fragile in an urban setting. Like any other genetically based trait, they say, whether it is fully expressed depends on learned responses; in this case, the degree to which people experience nature in their youth. Increasingly it is being experienced by urban youths, weakly or not at all, leading to indifference or even hostility to nature.

Adherents of the biophilia hypothesis fear that this indifference and dislike encourage a ballooning destruction and degradation of the natural world. The shrinkage of nature in turn, according to this view, is

gradually limiting opportunities to connect with a well-spring of psychological well-being.

Many of the adherents see all this not as an argument for retreating to a state of nature and repudiating modern urban society, an impossibility in any event, but rather as a powerful new rationale for conserving what is left of nature and reintroducing as much of it as possible into urban settings.

The living world, Dr. Wilson wrote in 1984, 'is the matrix in which the human mind originated and is permanently rooted.' In the new book he makes the point a little differently writing that 'the brain evolved in a biocentric world, not a machine-regulated world.'

Over the millions of years in which the human psyche was shaped, according to the developing hypothesis, survival and well-being depended on how effectively individuals coped with the natural environment. Those responding the fastest and easiest to signals sent by nature got along best.

Thus a survival advantage was conferred by learning quickly to recognize potentially lethal threats, like snakes and enclosed spaces where predators and enemies might hide. Advantage also came from learning easily to recognize the desirability of partly open spaces with scattered trees and water as friendly secure places to live. The recognition is accompanied by strong emotions, positive or negative.

Dr. Kellert, a professor of social ecology at Yale, postulates that interaction with nature has had an important effect on a wide range of human characteristics, including intellect, emotions and aesthetics. Separate people from nature, he argues, and they will be psychologically poorer. □

Reviews and Notices

SOME MOMENTS WITH THE MASTER:
Spiritual Dialogues with the Sufi Saint, Sai Rochaldas Sahib: By Dr. R. M. Hari; publ. H. M. Damodar, Shanti Nagar, Ulhasnagar (Maharashtra state), India; pp. 450; Rs.190/- (hardcover); Rs. 140/- (paperback).

Originally published in Sindhi in four volumes under the title *Ke Saitoon Sajnan San* during 1959-65, the present work in its translated form is a welcome addition to religious literature. Sai Rochal Sahib, a disciple of Sai Hazrat Qutab Ali Shah of Sindh, was a deeply spiritual person who wanted to see God face to face. His propensity to be in communion with the Divine made him leave government service. A specialist in ophthalmic surgery, he opened charitable dispensaries at Rohri, Karachi, and Hyderabad (Sind), and did not charge a penny from his patients. He lived in a true Sufi way, and ultimately attained to the Supreme State (*baqa-ba-Allah*). He was consecrated to the spiritual seat after the death of his co-disciple, Bhai Gobindram Sahib.

Sai Rochal Das Sahib was humble to the core and spent most of his time in meditation or social service. Though a householder he did not regard family life as an impediment on the spiritual path. His spiritual dialogues and discourses contained in the present volume bring out his deep understanding of the key metaphysical concepts. He did not believe in dry intellectualism but in the religion of love, devotion, and self-surrender. His observations on the Holy Work, the true Guru, Hatha Yoga, Divine Grace, *Ishq haqiqi* and *Ishq majaji*, humility, service, charity, renunciation and service, nature of mind, silence and concentration contain the wisdom of the ages.

The book has succinct life sketches of Hazrat Sai Qutab Ali Shah, Sai Rochal Das Sahib, and Dr. R. M. Hari who edited the present volume. It needs to be mentioned

that Dr. R. M. Hari, like his worthy father, Sai Rochal Das, was a saint of a high order, and succeeded to the spiritual seat after him. H. M. Damodar, son of Dr. R. M. Hari, is the present head of the Mission.

Well-produced, the book deserves to be read by all spiritual seekers.

Dr. Satish K. Kapoor, Jalandhar City, Punjab

GANESH: INVOCATION AND COMMENTARY ON CONSCIOUSNESS: By Akhter Ahsen; publ. Virgo Publications, L-67 A Malaviya Nagar, New Delhi 110 017; 1995; pp. xlv + 277; Rs. 300/-.

Ganesha, the Hindu deity with an elephant face that exudes childlike innocence, has fascinated people of many nations, irrespective of religion and creed. Akhter Ahsen who has specialized in imagery and imagery-based therapy, and who resides in New York, has presented the legend of this charming deity in verse, giving along with this his own interpretations.

Hindu mythology is not merely imagery. Fundamentally it is highly allegorical. The legends too vary in their details from region to region on the Indian subcontinent. Ahsen would have done well to mention whether he depended mainly on the Western authors cited by him; whether he has referred to any of the traditional interpretations; and if so, which of them. It appears his main sources are Nepali-Hindu books, which will then explain his referring to the 'river of Mara' and to Ganesha as 'Brahmaputra'.

Ahsen has good grasp of the Ganesha legend as also of Vedanta. His transliteration of Sanskrit words is, however, very awry. He is highly obsessed with what he calls the 'broken and misshapen form' of Ganesha and his broken tusk. This is where the student of western psychology in him comes to the fore. But it also shows that he

has missed an essential aspect of Hinduism, namely, that consciousness (to which he alludes in the book-title) is an integrated whole (*akhandā*) and can never be broken and fragmented.

His prayer to Ganesha is however interesting: he requests the Deity to break and remake himself in his own manner (God made man in his own image?). Some of Ahsen's statements sound strange, particularly to a Hindu, such as 'The One who changes all the time' (p. 87), and 'The world of double reality' (p. 183). He is fascinated by the term 'Svāhā', and uses it in the same manner as a semitic would exclaim 'Hallelujah'.

This book should be regarded only as a book of poems. To those not familiar with the Ganesha legend, to gather even the story content would not be easy. The commentaries given after the poems are not always useful. Beware, however, of the lengthy Introduction. What would you call a literary offering made by a student of western Psychology and Imagery, interested in Hindu mythology, learned in modern linguistics and acquainted with western philosophers and Sri Aurobindo—a maze of words? *Sabdajālam mahāranyam*, a web of words, like a great forest—enter the Introduction at your own risk!

Dr. Kamala S. Jaya Rao, Hyderabad

JESUS IN NEO-VEDANTA: A Meeting of Hinduism and Christianity: by Dr. K. P. Aleaz; Kant Publications, 1687, Multani Mohalla, Rani Bagh, Delhi 110 034; pp. 242; Rs. 300/-.

The *raison d'être* of interfaith dialogue as a method for the study of religion has been recognized by social scientists and theologians in recent years. A meaningful dialogue can deepen one's awareness of the Reality perceived by others, and help one to discern the *sui generis ontic* dimensions of other faiths. The era of *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* has given way to a period in which the salvific aspects of all historic faiths are viewed in a pluralistic perspective so as to formulate a

new theology for the present age.

The author of this book believes that dialogic theology alone can bring together different religious faiths and promote the principles of universalism in them. Not fully satisfied with Neo-Vedantic Christological studies by Indian Christians, Dr. Aleaz aims at identifying accurately The Neo-Vedantins' own interpretations of Jesus 'and show its significance in arriving at new meanings regarding the person and function of Jesus', the relevance of his teachings, and how these can prove to be fruitful in generating *koinonia* or spiritual fellowship.

Aleaz makes a scholarly appraisal of Neo-Vedanta by delineating the concepts of its key exponents—Swami Vivekananda and S. Radhakrishnan. He follows it up by analyzing the New-Vedantic approaches to other religions, which seem to be four-fold in character: Exclusivist, Inclusivist, Pluralistic, and Pluralistic-inclusivistic. He regards Neo-Vedanta as an important hermeneutical context for the construction of a Christology, and for bringing about the relational convergence of religions.

Aleaz takes up the Christology of Neo-Vedantins to prove that they all hold Jesus Christ in high esteem. He disapproves of the traditional and Western interpretations of Jesus which are somewhat dogmatic and insular. Viewed in the context of the Indian renaissance, Jesus, the Christ, is not in any way external to the Indian cultural heritage but very much internal to it, he says.

During the course of study Aleaz takes note of the various Indian Christian Christological constructions in the context of Advaita Vedanta—the Reception Model as represented in the works of Brahmabandhay Upadhyaya, K. Subba Rao, Carl Keller, J. G. Arapura, and others; the Reinterpretation Model of Mark Sunder Rao, Swami Abhishiktananda, Bede Griffiths and Raimundo Pannikar, and the Rejection Model of P. D. Devanandan and Surjit Singh.

Aleaz's work is readable; it is a praiseworthy attempt in the domain of dialogical theology. One may, however, ask how many Christians are likely to accept Krishna, Rama, Nanak, or Kabir the way non-Christians do Jesus Christ? If Cosmic conscious-

ness is one, what difference remains between the holy personages of different faiths?

Dr. Satish K. Kapoor

HANUMAN IN THE RAMAYANA OF VALMIKI AND THE RAMACHARITAMANASA OF TULSI DASA: *By Catherine Ludvik; publ. Motilal Banarsidass, 41 U.A. Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi 110 007; 1994; pp. 157; h.b. Rs. 140/-; p.b. Rs. 80/-.*

Commenting on the unique devotion Hanuman exemplifies, Sri Ramakrishna narrates a beautiful story: 'Once a man asked Hanuman which day of the fortnight it was. "Brother," said Hanuman, "I don't know anything of the day of the week or the fortnight, or the position of the stars. I think of Rama alone."' Indeed, it is not difficult to say Hanuman is the most popular God, because devotion is an attitude most people empathize with, or because he symbolizes the harmonious blending of the human and the non-human seeking to become divine.

Here is a well-written book that traces the origins of Hanuman, the monkey-god, through the various stages of evolution to emerge finally as the archetype of *dasya-bhava* (a relationship with God as between a faithful attendant and his master), one of the most potent modes of devotion. Thus the 'monkey' motif is explained by the author in a symbolic way, the frame being devotion: 'The very word *kapi* comes from *kamp*, meaning "to tremble" or "to shake", and thus to be unsteady.... Therefore, when all thoughts (monkeys) are brought under the control of the Lord (Rama), through their combined force, ignorance crystallized into the form of the ego (Ravana) is defeated.' Further, Hanuman represents, as an eminent leader, 'the quality of self-control', *brahmacharya*, for which he is justly famous.

From such 'framing', the author takes us through the entire spectrum of the complex character of Hanuman as a devotee por-

trayed by Valmiki and Tulsidasa. Everywhere she balances rigorous scholarship of the most exacting kind and a deep devotion to Hanuman. Indeed, it is fascinating to study the portrait presented as a persistent one: not only the epics, even the films and comic strips show that Hanuman has 'become India's Superman' with 'seemingly all-pervading presence'.

Here is a book that fascinates the devotee and delights the diligent scholar.

Dr. M. Sivaramakrishna, Hyderabad

IN SEARCH OF THE CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION: *New Light on Ancient India: By Georg Feuerstein, Subhash Kak, and David Frawley; publ. Quest Books, The Theosophical Publishing House, 306 W. Geneva Road, PO Box 270, Wheaton, IL 60189-0270, USA; 1995; Cloth \$24.95.*

'IN SEARCH OF THE CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION is truly groundbreaking and will provoke vigorous debate. In my estimate, this is a landmark book and the foundation for the rewriting of human history since 6000 BCE.'

—*Dr. Klaus Klostermeier,
Professor of Religious Studies,
University of Manitoba*

Rarely does a book challenge previously accepted historical theory—especially theory which has been the standard for over ninety years and taught in elementary schools across the country. Written by widely respected experts in the field of Indic Studies, *IN SEARCH OF THE CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION* proves that India was the birthplace of advanced culture, dispelling the longheld belief that Sumer was where civilization began. Authors Feuerstein, Kak and Frawley show through reinterpretation of existing archaeological, linguistic, and Vedic documentation that there was no 'Aryan invasion' bringing advancement of knowledge from the north. Advance culture already existed as revealed in the sumptuous tapes-

try of now-redated Vedic literature.

A book which will appeal to the 1.5 million Hindus living in the U.S., **IN SEARCH OF THE CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION** comes at a time when interest in the ancient world is at an all-time high. As more and more evidence around the world is uncovered, history demands to be rewritten. (Witness the unparalleled success of Riane Eisler's *The Chalice and the Blade*, which rewrote the spiritual history of European culture.) In an unfolding historical detective story destined for college reading lists, **Feuerstein, Kak** and **Frawley** conclusively prove that history as we know it must be reexamined.

Yoga practitioners and readers interested in Eastern religions will find **IN SEARCH OF THE CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION** a treasure-trove of Indian spirituality, whose symbol, metaphor and wisdom will enhance present-day life.

Author **Georg Feuerstein**, Ph.D., religion historian and Yoga researcher, has written over twenty books, including *Holy Madness*, and *Sacred Paths*. He lives in Lower Lake, California. **Subhash Kak**, Ph.D., is a Vedic scholar and a professor of electrical and computer engineering. His most recent books are *The Nature of Physical Reality* and *India at Century's End*. He lives in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. **David Frawley**, O.M.D., is director of the American Institute of Vedic Studies and an Ayurvedic specialist. His most recent books include *Gods, Sages, and Kings* and *From the River of Heaven*. He lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

IN SEARCH OF THE CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION has been submitted to the Quality Paperback Book Club, the Doubleday Book Club, and the History Book Club.

Messrs Quest Books

Books Received

The following four books, published by the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith, Deoghar, Bihar 814 112, are available from the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith; the Udbodhan Karyalay, 1 Udbodhan Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta 700 003; Ramakrishna Mission Saradapitha, Show Room, Belur Math, Howrah 711 202; Advaita Ashrama, 5 Dehi Entally Road, Calcutta 700 014; and the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Gol Park, Calcutta 700 029.

ŚAṆGĪTA MĀLĀ, (Hindi) 5th Edition, A book of stotras and songs, 1996, price Rs. 35/-.

VIVEKANANDA KĪ LAGHUKATHĀEM (Hindi) by Swami Premeshananda, tr. by the students of Vidyapith, A short life of Swami Vivekananda and a narration of stories told by him suitable for the development of spiritual and moral values in children, 1995, price Rs. 16/-.

VIVEKĀNANDER KATHĀ O GALPA (Bengali)

by Swami Premeshananda, Swami Vivekananda's sayings and stories retold for children, 1400 (Bengali Year), price Rs. 15/-.

SAṆGĪT SAṆGRAHA (Bengali) 11th Edition, A book of songs compiled by Swami Gowrishwarananda and Swami Vedananda, price Rs. 65/-.

SWAMI VIJÑANANDA: Life and Teachings: Translated into English by Devavrata Basu Roy (from the original in Bengali by Swami Vishwasrayananda); publ. Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras 600 004; 1995; pp. 75; price Rs. 12/-.

LIVING WISDOM: VEDANTA IN THE WEST: Ed. Pravrajika Vrajaprana; first Indian edition; publ. Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras 600 004; 1995; pp. 299; price Rs. 85/-.

(Please see the March '96 issue of the *PB* for the review article on the American edition of this book.) □